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CATECHISM
DOCTRINAL, MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND
LITURGICAL.

CATECHISM :

DOCTRINAL MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND LITURGICAL :

WITH ANSWERS.

TO THE

Objections drawn from the Sciences against Religion.

BY THE REV. PATRICK POWER

(Translator of Orsini's "Life of the Blessed Virgin", and
"History of the Devotions to the Blessed Virgin.")

WITH EPISCOPAL APPROBATION.

"Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee".—I. TIM. iv. 16.

"We have in children a precious deposit committed to our care and vigilance. Let us take all possible care of them, and be on our guard, lest the crafty enemy, who seeks only the ruin of souls, snatch them from us to make them his miserable prey".—ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON TIM. iv. 16.

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CATECHISM, A.D.,

ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

Q. To how many Commandments may the Ten Commandments be reduced?

A. To those two principal Commandments, which are the two great precepts of Charity:—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. This do, and thou shalt live"—*Luke*, x. 27.

1. "The ten Commandments", and all the duties and obligations which they prescribe, and the substance of whatever God commands and forbids, may be reduced to the two principal Commandments, which are, the love of God and our neighbour, for which reason the Apostle says: "He that loveth has fulfilled the law". The love of God and our neighbour "are the two great precepts of Charity", which, like two branches, sprout from the same root—one of them regarding God, and the other regarding our neighbour.

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2. In reference to the first great precept of Charity or the love of God, our Divine Redeemer, in His reply to a doctor of the law, who tempting Him put the following question: "Master, which is the great Commandment in the law?" said to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". On these two Commandments dependeth "the whole law and the prophets"—*Matt.*, xxii. 36, 40. We should, therefore, love God "with our whole heart", that is, we should love him more than any thing else in the world, for He is our first beginning and our last end. We must prefer Him to all creatures, and be disposed to lose all things rather than forfeit His holy grace—we must prefer Him to all the goods of world—to all the pleasures of the world—to honours, friends, and even to our very life. We naturally prefer our health and life before anything else in this world; and in consequence of this preference, we willingly part with our ease, with our riches, even with some of the members of our body, if at any time the loss of any of them be necessary for preserving health and life. In like manner we must prefer God to everything, so as to be prepared to part with all things, when such parting may be at any time necessary for preserving His love and friendship.

3. Such is the love that our Lord require from us, for His words are plain and clear on this point: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me", He says, "is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me"—*Matt.*, x. 37. We are therefore obliged to prefer God to everything, and to lose all the good things of this life rather than lose Him by sin, and therefore must be prepared to sacrifice ease and comfort, and home and friends, and

suffer all the evils of life, and lose all the good things of life, rather than to lose God. If, dear children, we love God in this manner, that is, "with our whole heart", we shall be very careful to do whatever we know is pleasing to Him, and be most willing to obey every Commandment of His; for this is what is meant by loving God "with our whole heart".

4. To love God "with thy whole soul", is to employ all the power and faculties of our soul in glorifying, praising, and blessing Him; in referring everything we do to His honour and glory. This love requires that everything we do should be done with a view to please Him—that our daily aim and intention should be to promote His interests and glory. God has a full right to everything we do, and has a claim on our acts, thoughts, and words, for He is our Creator and preserver. All we have and are—our souls and bodies, our senses, powers, faculties, and members, belong to God—are His property; and, therefore, He has an indisputable right to every act of ours. You should, then, love God with "thy whole soul", and devote every faculty of that soul to His love. You should place God in your heart and in your love, above everything—above the Angels of Heaven and all the saints of Paradise—above your parents, your children, your friends, your benefactors—above all the goods and pleasures of this world—above your well-being, your health, and even your very life. We should not endure a single affection in our heart that has not reference to God; and we should love nothing except inasmuch as it relates to God. As He is our Sovereign good and our last end, we should love Him with our "whole soul".*

5. "And with all thy strength and with all thy mind" we should, too, love God. To love Him "with all thy strength", is to give Him our words and actions. We ourselves are His, and that by many

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titles—we were made by Him alone; and, therefore, as the whole fund is His, so also should be the whole produce. As the tree is His, so also should be all the fruit of the tree. The “mind” is the seat of thought, and, consequently, of consideration, and meditation, and recollection. Wherefore, to love God with “thy whole mind”, is to have our thoughts ever turned towards Him—to consider Him—to meditate daily upon Him, and all that relates to Him—to walk always in His presence. He always remembers us, and thinks on us—His eye is always upon us: and should we not then think often upon Him. Therefore the love of God is not only to reside in our hearts, and to fill our mind, but should also show itself in our conversation, and regulate all our words and actions; for the love of God is like a fire which cannot lie idle, but works great things when an occasion and opportunity are presented: “This love of God”, says St. Francis de Sales, “should prevail over everything that we love, and rule all our desires—should be a love *most cordial*, taking possession of our whole hearts—a love *most affectionate*, engaging our whole soul—a love *most general*, employing all our powers—a love *most strong*, exercising all our strength and vigour”.

6. “And thy neighbour as thyself”, you should also love to fulfil the great precept of Charity; for the love of our neighbour is inseparable from the love of God—as the Scriptures tell us that we cannot love God, without, at the same time, loving our neighbour. The love of your neighbour has so necessary a connexion with the love of God, that we cannot fulfil the one without the other. “If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar”, says St. John. These two great precepts of Charity—the love of God and our neighbour—are two branches that spring from the same root, and

belong to the self-same divine virtue; because the same motives that oblige us to love God for His own sake, oblige us also to love all that are made to His image, and redeemed by the blood of His Son, for the sake of their Maker and Redeemer. Our Lord has made this love of our neighbour a favourite commandment—the very badge by which He would have His disciples known and distinguished: “I give you a new commandment”, says He, “that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”—*John*, xiii. 34, 35. And this mutual love for one another—this fraternal union and charity, He inculcated in the strongest terms in the last conference He held with His beloved disciples, that both they and all of us might consider it as His last dying injunction, and as a most precious legacy, which he has bequeathed to us all: “This do, and thou shalt live”.

Q. And who is my neighbour?—*Luke*, x. 29.

A. Mankind of every description; and without any exception of persons, even those who injure us, or differ from us in religion.

7. As the catechism tells us, dear children, our neighbour is “mankind of every description”—all men in general, because all men, equally as ourselves, have been created to the image of God, and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. By our “neighbour” we are not to understand merely our parents, our friends, our benefactors, those who live in the same city or town with us, or those who profess the same religion with us. No, not those alone; but “neighbour”, in the Gospel sense, means all men, without exception of persons or distinction of creed—strangers equally as fellow-countrymen—

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heretics, sunk deep in error, equally as Christians enlightened with the light of the true faith—Jews and idolators—our enemies as well as our friends. Our “neighbour” comprises all men; for all men are children of the same God, and the Lord sheds His favours and benefits on all. For the wicked, equally as the just, the dew renders the earth fruitful—for the wicked, as well as the good, the sun glows in the firmament, and diffuses heat and light over the world; for such is the will of our Father in Heaven.†

8. Even “those who injure us, or differ from us in religion”, must be considered our neighbours. Though we might have suffered many injuries at their hands, and been maligned, and ridiculed, and persecuted by them—though they may be every day studying how they may inflict on us new injuries and affronts, and though they let no opportunity pass of insulting our religion and ridiculing its practices, still we must consider them as our neighbours, and act towards them in a friendly way. Whatever change may take place in the person of our neighbour, or in his disposition towards us—though he should become our enemy—though he should do us every kind of evil; yet, still his relation to God remains the same—still he is the child of God, created to His image, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, a member of His mystical body; and, being all this, he must be always considered our “neighbour”; for, as St. Paul says, “in one spirit we are all baptized in one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free—*I Cor.*, xii. 13. “There is neither Jew nor Greek—there is neither bond nor free—there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”—*Gal.*, iii. 28.

Q. How can I love my neighbour as myself?

A. "As you would", says Christ, "that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner"—*Luke*, vi. 31.

9. According to these words of Jesus Christ, in order to fulfil the command of loving our neighbours as ourselves, we should do to them as we wish they should do to us—that is, to love our neighbours really and to the purpose; to love them with a sincere love and an efficacious love; to love them at all times, and under all circumstances, prepared to do them the best services we can in their real wants and necessities; to love our neighbours as ourselves; to do everything to them that we should wish should be done to ourselves, and, therefore, to assist them in their affairs, as we should wish to be assisted in ours; to comfort them in their troubles, afflictions, want, and sickness, as we should reasonably desire to be comforted and relieved were we in the like circumstances; to bear with the defects and weaknesses of others, as we would have them to bear with ours. It is not enough to love our neighbour as long as fortune smiles upon him, when he is in good humour, or as long as he is a true friend, and then to shut our doors against him when he begins to sink in the world, and to break off with him because he is in ill humour, or not in an obliging mood. No, that is not the way to love our neighbour as ourselves. The love we have for ourselves is not content with such cold, barren, interested, dissembling, idle, or unprofitable kindness.

Q. What particular duties are required of me by that rule?

A. Never to injure your neighbour by word

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or deed, in his person, property, or character: to wish well to him, and to pray for him, and always to assist him as far as you are able, in his spiritual and corporal necessities.

10. By that rule of “doing to others as we wish they should do unto us”, you are, in the first place, required “never to injure your neighbour by word or deed, in his person, property, or character”. “In his person,” we should never injure him—never strike or maim him, never reproach or insult him, but refrain from everything that may hurt his feelings—such as scornful epithets, contempts, scoffs, direct contradictions, indiscreet and damaging reports, and a thousand other like things, which are the never-ending source of quarrels and bitterness.

11. We should, too, never injure our neighbour “in his property”, by unjustly taking from him what belongs to him, or co-operating in any way, either by command or counsel, to his injury. We should not contract debts, which we have not sufficient probability of being able to pay, nor retain the goods of others, but should discharge what we owe, and pay in due time whatever is due by us to our neighbour.

12. In his “character” we also should never injure our neighbour. Our neighbour’s character is of more value to him than his property; for if his character be once blasted, he is no longer respected or esteemed, but he is pointed at with scorn and derision. We ought, then, preserve the reputation of our neighbour as much as possible, and suppress any calumnies and detractions that may be uttered against him. If one be accused of a crime which he has not done, defend him, and say it is not so. One’s character is very tender, and when once injured, cannot, without much difficulty, be restored; and on that account, we

should carefully guard against giving expression to our opinions and impressions concerning the reputation of our neighbour. The slightest remark with reference to our neighbour's conduct sometimes produces the most disastrous results, and inflicts an injury that, when speaking of him, we never contemplated.

13. "To wish well to him—to pray for him" is also a duty which the love of our neighbour demands from us. We should "wish well" to our neighbour; that is, to desire that every good thing should happen to him, that his affairs and prospects should succeed with him, that no evil may attend him, but that every blessing and grace may flow on him; and not only should we "wish him well", but we should be always ready and inclined to do our neighbour every good in our power. We should also "pray for him", endeavouring, in every way, to withdraw him from vice and the occasions of sin—if he be in them—either by ourselves or by others, who can prevail on him, offering up our petitions to God that He may look down with mercy on our erring neighbour, convert him from his evil ways, and bring him back to the paths of virtue and holiness.

14. "And always to assist him, as far as you are able, in his spiritual and corporal necessities" is, moreover, required of us by the precept of the love of our neighbour. We should assist our neighbour in his "spiritual necessities"; for it is a duty to which we are very strictly obliged, and we cannot neglect that duty without being guilty of sin; for that neglect will be without excuse in the sight of God. Can there be anything more criminal before God, than to see or know any one in danger of losing his soul, and refuse giving him all the assistance in our power? This obligation is so great, that it has made St. John Chrysostom say that "God will require no less account

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from us of the salvation of our neighbour, than of our own; and that though we should have lived very piously, the sanctity of our life will be unprofitable, if we have neglected the salvation of others". And he gives this reason: "because he who is wanting in assisting his neighbour in his corporal necessities, is rejected by God at the day of judgment, notwithstanding the good he hath otherwise performed; much more will he deserve punishment, who neglects to succour his brother in a thing of far greater importance—the salvation of his soul".—*Adversus Vituperat.*

15. If one should see a fire bursting out, and could, either by himself or by warning others, easily extinguish that fire in its commencement, but through neglect suffered the fire to extend, would he not be guilty of all the loss caused by the burning? How much more is he answerable for the ruin of a soul, who has it in his power to avert that ruin, but who through neglect, or indifference, or vain fear, allows that soul to perish? When, therefore, you see any one offend God mortally—for example, by swearing, blaspheming, or by speaking obscene words—endeavour to check him, as far as you are able, by mild and charitable admonitions.

16. "In his corporal necessities" we must also assist our neighbour as far as we are able. There is no virtue more earnestly recommended in the Scriptures than that of assisting our neighbour in "his corporal necessities". In the Old Law, God strongly enforced charity to the poor. The pious Tobias admonishes his son never to turn his face from the poor, telling him that, for so doing, God will never turn His face from him, but assist him in all his necessities. In the Gospel, nothing is so frequently recommended as assisting our neighbour in "his corporal necessities". In St. Luke's Gospel, the

Son of God promises that He shall be bountiful to us if we assist our poor neighbour, and that He will act towards us as we act towards the indigent. And St. John tells that he who has not compassion for the necessities of his neighbour, cannot say that he has charity, or that he loves God. Jesus Christ tells us, in the sentence which He will pronounce on the last day, that what is given or refused to the poor, is given or refused to Himself; and that if we be charitable to the poor, we shall enjoy Him for ever in Heaven; and if hard-hearted to them, we shall be condemned to eternal torments.†

17. It is, indeed, surprising that of all the good works which the just shall have done, for obtaining eternal life, the Son of God should attribute their salvation to charity alone—"because I was hungry, and you gave me to eat"—and that of all the crimes by which the wicked have deserved eternal flames, He should only accuse them of their hard heartedness towards the poor—"because I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat"—and their indifference to the sufferings of others! And as the Son of God, the wisdom of the eternal Father, neither did nor said anything without the strongest reasons, we can assign no other reason for the expressions He will make use of at the day of judgment, than that of letting us see, by such words, what great value He sets upon the charity shown to others. The just, by their charity, deserve a continuation of His grace, for their final perseverance; and the wicked, through their want of compassion for the poor and distressed, deserve to be disregarded and abandoned by Him, as they abandoned the poor.

18. Take pleasure, then, dear children, in relieving the miseries of the poor and needy. When you see a poor man, or one in distress, remember he is your equal; and if you do not suffer like him, remember

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it is owing to God's great goodness towards you. Cherish as you grow up this amiable virtue of charity to the poor, imitating holy Job, who says that compassion for the miseries of others increased in him from his infancy—*Job*, xxxi. 18. According to thy means be merciful. If thou hast much, give abundantly; if thou hast little, take care, even so, to bestow willingly; a little; for doing this, thou shalt store up for thyself a good reward for the day of distress; for alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.

Q. Am I also obliged to love my enemies?

A. Most certainly: "Love your enemies", says Christ; "do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you"—*Luke*, vi.; *Matt.*, v.

19. In a previous question, we have been told, dear children, that we must love our neighbour, and that by our neighbour is understood not only our relatives, friends, and those who act kindly towards us, but also all those "who hate you"; for they, equally as those who do good to us, are God's creatures, made to His image, and redeemed by the blood of Christ. As our enemies are included in our neighbours, we must, therefore, love and do good to them. We are not to confine our love to those who love us and are kind to us; for, as our Saviour says, "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens the same?"—*Matt.*, v. 46. No, our love must take in our enemies as well as our friends; for our Lord expressly commands it: "You have heard", says He, "that it has been said, Thou

shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but **I SAY TO YOU**, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you"—*Matt.*, v. 43.

20. See how strongly the love of "enemies" is enforced in this command: "But I say to you"—whatever others may say or think on the matter, and I say it in very plain language, so as not to leave it in the power of any one to give a false interpretation of My command—"but I say to you". He is addressing the Jews, whose maxims on that point were altogether opposed to such a law; for they believed that all that was required of them was to love those that loved them, and that they could avenge themselves on those who injured them—"a tooth for a tooth, and an eye for an eye"—"but I say to you"—I, your Creator, your Master, your Lawgiver; I, on whom you depend for everything; I, from whose goodness you have everything to hope, and from whose justice you have everything to fear—I not only advise and admonish you, but I *command* you to "love your enemies". Yes, it is no less than the command of God, and a command with which there can be no compromise; for strictly complied with it must be, and that to the very letter.

21. Nothing can or will exempt you, dear children, from that law of "loving your enemies". However good and virtuous you be, though in your conduct you be models of piety and religion—though you be unceasing in prayer—though you should fast and practise austerities like the penitents of the desert—though you should give alms in abundance to the poor—though you should offer the richest gifts on the altar of God—though, as the Apostle says, "you should distribute your goods to the poor, and give up your body to be burned", yet all that would be of little avail if you do not "love your enemies".

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As a condition upon which these austerities and offerings would be accepted by God, He requires that we should "love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, and bless them that persecute and calumniate us".

22. To love "your enemies" is, then, dear children, to you a precept of strict obligation, and you must obey that precept at all times and under all circumstances. Whatever injuries we suffer at the hands of others, we should not entertain angry feelings against them; for it is folly to imagine that our neighbour is the cause of our sufferings, and most unjust to conceive an aversion or anger against him on that account. Does a parent attribute the death of his child to the sword that pierces through his body? and does he rise into a passion against that sword as the cause of his death? Would not every one look upon him as a man without sense or reason if he did so? Does a sick person attribute the pain he feels in having his leg cut off, to the surgeon's knife or saw, and entertain hatred against them on that account? The sword and knife are merely the instruments of pain, but the hand that manages them is the cause of what is done. Just so it is in the case of our enemies. Our neighbour who injures us is but the instrument in the hands of God; but God Himself is the cause of all we suffer, who manages the instrument as He pleases, and regulates every word our neighbour speaks, and everything he does against us; and hence the Scripture says: "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God"—*Ecclus.*, xi. 14. Such being the case, we should, therefore, "love our enemies", cherish them with kindness and affection—"do good to them that hate you": that is, advance their interests in every way, though they should be most unfriendly to us—"bless them that curse you,"

beseeking God that He may pour down every blessing and favour on them—"and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you": that is, offer up your petitions to Almighty God, that He may grant happiness, and grace, and every other favour to those who are every day *persecuting* and *calumniating* us by evil reports and wicked slanders.†

HISTORICAL TRAITS.

ST. PAUL'S LOVE OF GOD.

* The Apostle St. Paul may be proposed as a perfect model of love for God, who, having destined him for a great work and much suffering, bestowed on him a great soul, gifted with an unshaken courage and the most ardent charity. "The charity of Jesus Christ presseth us", he says, in his second epistle to the Corinthians. And again: "Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again". Writing to the Galatians and Romans, he speaks as follows: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me". Who, then, shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? But in all these things we overcome because of Him that loveth us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord"—*Epistle to the Romans*.

ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL AND HER LOVE OF HER NEIGHBOUR.

† The blessed Mother de Chantal was charitable towards all, and at all times, but especially towards the poor and sick. She was not one of those who look upon the poor as troublesome, and who relieve them in order to get rid of them. She loved them, and treated them with the tenderest consideration, and had more pleasure in giving than they could have in receiving. During a season of famine, she not only fed the

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poor who lived upon her own property, but also those of her neighbourhood, who flocked round her as their common mother. But she even did more than this—she ordered that all the sick and destitute should be brought to her. Amongst others a wretched man was found covered with ulcers—a most pitiable object, stretched at full length by the side of a hedge. She received the poor leper as a boon from heaven—she dressed his wounds—she washed his sores—during four whole months she waited upon him personally, and often served him upon her knees. She kept him until he was at the point of death, when he said: “Madam, if the Lord hears the prayers of the poor, then indeed your joy will be great hereafter”. “Go, my child”, said she, embracing him, and bathing him with her tears; “in your life you have suffered as Lazarus; and now like him you will be carried by angels into heaven”. At that moment he expired. She would insist upon laying him out with her own hands; and when her friends remonstrated with her, fearing she might contract the disease, her reply was: “No, I fear no leprosy but that of sin”. What a rebuke is this to those who shrink from coming in contact with their fellow-creatures because they are poor and sick! Madame de Chantal was but twenty-two years of age when she thus devoted herself to the practice of works of charity.—*Life of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.*

THE PRIEST'S REVENGE.

† One day in the year 1793, the inhabitants of Fegréac and the surrounding hamlets were assembled together, to celebrate one of the solemn feasts of the Church. The Abbé Aurain was at the altar celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass, when suddenly the dreaded sound of the tocsin resounded through the building. Instantly all those in the church sprang to their feet, but the priest alone showed no emotion, but bending over the altar, he struck his breast and consumed the consecrated elements. The tumult outside increasing, the priest took off the chasuble, stole, and alb. Two dragoons of the republican army came to the door of the church; the curé seeing them, quickly descended the altar steps, and passed out of the church. The republicans followed. As he was strong and active, he leaped over the fences and enclosures of the fields. His pursuers followed, and were rapidly gaining upon him, when he found himself on the precipitous banks of a river. Without pausing to consider, he plunged into the water and swam across. When he reached the opposite bank, he looked behind him, and saw one of the two soldiers rushing into the water after him. Con-

tinuing his flight, the abbé ascended the hill that rose before him—he increased his speed, and never paused until he had reached the summit. He is saved, but scarcely had he reflected on his escape from his pursuers when a cry of distress struck his ear. He paused and listened, and again he heard the same piercing cry. Hastily retracing his steps to the brow of the hill, he descried one of the soldiers struggling in the water, and on the point of sinking to rise no more. With the same speed with which he had fled from his pursuer, did he now hasten to the rescue. When he reached the banks of the river the soldier had disappeared, but he plunged into the stream and dived again to seize the drowning man. At length he reappeared above the water, bringing back to land the senseless body of the dragoon, which he continued to chafe with his hands until animation was restored. In a few moments the soldier opened his eyes, and recognizing the priest of Fegréac, he gasped in faint accents: “What! is it you who have saved me—you whom I was pursuing, and whose life I had sworn to take?” “It is so”, said the abbé calmly, “and you now see that we priests are not revengeful, but feel ourselves bound—as every Christian is—to forgive our enemies, and requite evil with good. In being able to save your life, I have been more than usually fortunate; that is all, and I thank God for it. Do you thank Him also; and cease to persecute those who believe in God and serve Him”. “Go—go quick!” said the soldier, “here come my companions. Fly while you can, I will go and meet them and tell them you have escaped. Adieu! I shall never forget you”—*French Revolution.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Can we reduce the ten Commandments to two principal ones?
2. What do you mean by loving God with our whole heart?
3. Should we sacrifice everything to the love of God?
4. What do you mean by loving God with our whole soul?
5. How should we love God with all our strength and mind?
6. Should the love of our neighbour be united to the love of God?
7. What persons are meant by our neighbours?

18 ON THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

8. Is our enemy, or a person of a different religion, to be considered our neighbour ?

9. In what way should we love our neighbour as ourselves ?

10. Should we refrain from insults, scoffs, and evil reports, in reference to our neighbour ?

11. In what way should we act, so as not to injure our neighbour in his property ?

12. How should we protect our neighbour's character ?

13. Should we wish well, and pray for our neighbour ?

14. Are we obliged to assist our neighbour in his spiritual necessities ?

15. Must we render an account of our neighbour's ruin, if we refuse to assist him ?

16. How do you prove that we must assist our neighbour in his corporal necessities ?

17. Can you show from the words of Jesus Christ on the last day, that we are bound to assist our neighbour in his corporal necessities ?

18. Should children always cherish the virtue of charity ?

19. Should we love our enemies, as well as our neighbours ?

20. Does our Lord command us to love our enemies ?

21. Are our good works of any avail, if we love not our enemies ?

22. Is it folly to entertain anger against those who injure us ?

PRACTICE.

1. Let the love of God take possession of your whole heart, and never allow anything to divide that love with Him.

2. Always recollect that the love of God must be accompanied with a love of our neighbour, as we cannot love God without loving our neighbour.

3. We should never forget, that even our enemies are to be loved by us, and that nothing will justify hatred or ill-will against them.

PRAYER.

O my God ! we now see how necessary it is that we should love Thee. If we love Thee not, everything else we do will avail us little. To love Thee with our whole heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves, is the great commandment of the law ; and that important command we shall endeavour henceforth to fulfil, assisted by Thy heavenly grace. We regret that hitherto we have been forgetful of this great pro-

cept, and have given our hearts to creatures; but now taught the necessity of loving Thee and our neighbour, our acts, words, and thoughts shall evermore be directed to promote Thy honour and advance the interests of our neighbours. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

Q. Are there any other Commandments besides the ten Commandments of God?

A. There are; the Commandments or precepts of the Church, which are chiefly six.

1. "Besides the ten Commandments of God", which we have now explained, there are, dear children, others which we must also observe, and they are the Commandments of the Church. They are called "the Commandments of the Church", because they have been given to us by the Church, which has received from God the power to command the faithful: and as the Church has received that power, her children are bound to obey her. God will not regard as His children those who do not respect the Church as their mother. The power of commanding resides in the chief Pastors—the Pope and the Bishops; for these are they that Jesus Christ appointed to rule His flock—"He has placed Bishops to rule the Church of God"—*Acts*, xx. 28. This power is necessary to the chief Pastors; for without it the Church could not be governed, and therefore did Christ say, "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me"—*Luke*, x. 16. This power, which the Church received from her

divine Founder, she has never ceased to exercise. From the very beginning of Christianity, the Apostles issued their commands ; and we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that St. Paul went from city to city prescribing their observance, and that the early Christians received and obeyed them cheerfully.

2. The commands of the Church are many, and are to be found in its General and National Councils ; but there are six principal Commandments, and these every Catholic is strictly bound to observe ; for Christ says : “ If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican ” — *Matt.*, xviii. 17. And let no one say that the Commandments of God are sufficient for all Christians, and that the laws of the Church are superfluous.

3. The Commandments of the Church are but the development and application of the Commandments of God. For example, God commands that some day should be set apart and consecrated to His worship ; the Church has, for this purpose, fixed on Sunday, and prescribes the manner in which it is to be kept holy. God commands us to adore Him ; and for this purpose the Church has appointed festivals and ceremonies for honouring the mysteries of our holy religion. God wills that we should work out our salvation ; and Jesus Christ, to enable us to arrive at that great end, has instituted the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice ; and the Church commands that we should, on certain days, celebrate or assist at this Divine Sacrifice, and at certain times receive the sacraments of Penance and the holy Eucharist. God orders us to expiate our sins, and mortify our passions, which are the sources of sin : for this the Church has appointed fast days and days of abstinence. We see now that the Commandments of the Church are only the accomplishment and application of the Commandments of God.

Q. Say the six Commandments of the Church.

A. 1. To hear Mass on Sundays and all holy days of obligation.

2. To fast and abstain on the days commanded.

3. To confess our sins at least once a-year.

4. To receive worthily the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within the time appointed; that is, from Ash-Wednesday to the octave day of the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, inclusive.

5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.

6. Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times, nor to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred, or otherwise prohibited by the Church, nor clandestinely.

4. These are, dear children, the six principal Commandments of the Church. You often are called on to say them. And why? That you may not forget them—that you may be reminded every day of your obligations and duties. The Church has issued many precepts regarding faith and morals, besides the six Commandments, but we make no mention here of them. They are to be found among her decrees and ordinances—in her canons and rules; but the six Commandments are the principal ones, and each of these in turn we shall proceed to explain.

Q. What are our first and chief duties on Sundays and kept Holidays?

A. To hear Mass devoutly, and in every other respect we should keep them holy.

5 “Our first and chief duties on Sundays and kept Holidays”, are the hearing of Mass, and the hearing of it devoutly; for of all the works of piety by which we can sanctify the “Sundays and kept Holidays”, the hearing of Mass is certainly the first

and most necessary. Sacrifice is the most important act of religion, and one by which we pay to God the most perfect homage. The obligation of assisting at Mass on the days set apart for the worship of God has existed, and been complied with, at all times since the days of the Apostles. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, "that on the first day of the week, the faithful assembled for the breaking of bread"; that is, to offer the Holy Sacrifice, and to participate thereof. The sacred mysteries were called the *breaking of bread*, in order that the unbelievers should not know their nature. From the earliest ages to the present time, the Church has always insisted on the necessity of hearing Mass on Sundays and kept Holidays. This duty is strictly enjoined on all the faithful by her express command, and, therefore, can never be neglected without a grievous sin, unless real necessity excuse it.

3. To satisfy this obligation, and to perform "our first and chief duties on Sundays", we must not only be present in body during Mass, but we must hear it "devoutly"; that is, we must hear the Mass with attention, respect, and piety. We must hear it with attention; that is, our thoughts must be altogether taken up with the divine and glorious action that is taking place during the Mass. We must hear it with *respect*; that is, with great modesty in our dress and in our demeanour, and a deep reverence of the soul at this adorable Sacrifice, at which the Angels themselves assist with fear and trembling. We should hear it with *piety*; that is, not negligently and by custom, as many do, but with love and devotion, offering it up with the intention by which the Church celebrates it, which is, to adore God for His greatness, majesty, and power, to give Him thanks for His favours, to implore His mercy for our sins, to beg His grace for ourselves and

others, especially those graces of converting ourselves entirely to Him, and of living for ever in His service and love.*

7. "And in every other respect we should keep them holy". Besides hearing Mass devoutly "on Sundays and kept Holidays", and refraining from servile work, there is something more required of us. Although the Church does not bind us by any positive precept to spend the "Sundays and kept Holidays" in other religious exercises, except that of hearing Mass; yet, if we are desirous of entering into the spirit of the Church, we should, together with hearing Mass, give at least, a part of those days to other devotional exercises. The devotional exercises that we should in particular practise on those days, are attending at evening prayers and spiritual instructions, that we may praise God and learn the duties of our religion, and the obligations of our state of life. Instructing the ignorant is another great duty by which we can sanctify the "Sundays and kept Holidays", and one most pleasing to God. For if it be agreeable to God to assist our poor brethren when they are hungry, cold, or naked, how much more so must it be when we assist them in their *spiritual* wants. By aiding them in their *spiritual* necessities, we shall give God honour and glory, we shall give the ignorant a knowledge of their religious duties, and obtain for ourselves a crown of immortal glory.

8. Saying the *Rosary* or *Beads* in the church or at home, is also a very pious practice, and one calculated to sanctify the "Sundays and kept Holidays". On all those who recite that form of prayer, God will bestow many graces and blessings, and His Blessed Mother will be a powerful intercessor with Him for all those her devout clients, and will obtain for them many favours and graces.

9. In spending the “Sundays and kept Holidays” in this manner, and in the performance of other good works—as for example examining our consciences to see in what way we have spent the past week, preparing for the sacraments, pious conversation, reading pious books,—we shall indeed perform “our first and chief duties”, and truly sanctify the Sundays and Holidays.*

Q. Is it a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or kept Holiday?

A. It is, if the omission be culpable: and fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, and all such persons, sin *grievously*, who hinder, without sufficient cause, children, servants, or any other subject to them, from hearing Mass on a Sunday or kept Holiday—I. *Tim.*, v. 8.

10. We are obliged by the first precept of the Church, as we have already seen, to hear Mass on “Sundays and kept Holidays”; and that obligation consists in being present during the time of the celebration of Mass, and also in assisting at it in a proper manner, that is, with attention and devotion. With regard to our being present, the Command expressly obliges us to hear Mass on “Sundays and kept Holidays”. Now, to hear Mass is to hear the whole Mass, and consequently the Command obliges all to be present at the celebration of that great Sacrifice from the beginning to the end. Whoever, therefore, is absent from any portion of it through his own fault, is guilty of sin; and the sin will be greater, the greater the part of the Mass be that he is absent from. And if he be absent during any one

* See chapter xxvii., vol. i.

of the four principal parts of which the Mass is composed, he sins “grievously”, and does not comply with the obligation, no more than if he had been absent during the whole of the Sacrifice; so that he would be under the necessity of hearing Mass again that day, if he had the opportunity of doing so.

11. To understand this, we must remember that the celebration of the Mass is divided into four parts. The first part is the preparation of the people, which is from the prayer that the priest recites at the foot of the altar to the end of the Gospel. The second part is the preparation of the matter of the Sacrifice, that is, from the end of the Gospel to the *Sanctus*. The third part is the action of the Sacrifice itself, which is from the *Sanctus* to the *Pater Noster*. And the fourth part is the Communion, that is, from the *Pater Noster* to the end of the last Gospel.

12. Now, in order to fulfil the obligation of “hearing Mass”, we must be present at all these four parts, as they are all necessary for the integrity of the Sacrifice. And if a person should *culpably*, or through sloth and negligence, delay going to the Church till the first part be ended, though he assist at the other three, he sins grievously; for he cannot be said to “hear Mass” or to fulfil the obligation.* The reason is, because by such “culpable omission” he robs the Almighty God of part of that homage which He expressly requires of him, and of

* *Quænam omissio audiendo sacro sit peccatum grave?* Diverse sunt sententiæ: *prima* dicit esse grave omittere ab initio ad epistolam exclusive; *secunda* dicit, esse grave, si omitteretur inclusive usque ad epistolam; *tertia* dicit, non esse grave, si omitteretur ab initio usque ad evangelium inclusive, modo audiatur usque ad ultimum evangelium. *Secunda* sententia mihi est probabilior et est communior; sed *tertiam* non puto improbabilem.—*St. Alphonsus de Ligorio, Homo Apostolicus, Tract vi, No. 33.*

the whole, as far as the object of the Command of the Church is concerned.†

13. We should, then, dear children, arrive at the church in sufficient time to be present at the commencement of the Mass. However, should we be late, and should not enter the church even until after the Consecration, we would be bound to remain until the conclusion of the Mass, if we could not on that day hear another. It is true we would not satisfy the precept of the Church, but we should do whatever lies in our power, and that is to remain and unite ourselves to the others until the Sacrifice be completed. If it be sinful to delay, through sloth or negligence, entering the church until after the Mass is commenced, it is also a sin to leave the church before the conclusion of the Holy Sacrifice. The sin is greater or lesser according as the part of the Mass from which he absents himself be greater or lesser; and if one leaves the church, without necessity, before the Communion of the priest, he is guilty of a grievous sin, because the Communion of the priest belongs to the essence of the Sacrifice, or is, at least, its essential complement.

14. If necessity obliges us to leave the church for a few moments, we satisfy the precept notwithstanding; but if we absent ourselves for a considerable time, or during an essential part of the Mass—for example, during the consecration of the body or the blood, or during the Communion of the priest—we are bound to hear another Mass on that day.

15. To satisfy the precept of “hearing Mass”, we should, too, assist at the entire Mass of the same priest. If, for example, we should hear a part of one Mass—from the Introit to the Consecration inclusively—and should hear a part of another from the Consecration exclusively to the end, we would not fully satisfy the precept. For a still greater

reason, the precept would not be satisfied by hearing at the same time two different parts of Mass.

16. "And fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, and all such persons, sin *grievously*, who hinder, without sufficient cause, children, servants, or any other subject to them, from hearing Mass on a Sunday or kept Holiday". Yes, they "sin grievously", as being the persons who prevent those under them from complying with the obligation of hearing Mass. The sin will lie at the doors of those fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, who employ their children and servants in doing work for the family, in taking care of cattle, and the like; for, owing to that, the children and servants cannot go to church to "hear Mass" or to listen to instructions. And for their neglect in this respect, and for the consequent ignorance of the children and servants, the parents and guardians must render a very severe account to God. If they neglect that duty of sending them to Mass on Sunday and Holidays, they "sin grievously"; for St. Paul says: "If any one have not care of his own, and particularly of those of his house, he has renounced the faith, and is worse than an infidel"—*I. Tim.*, v. 8. They should, therefore, see that all those over whom they are placed by God, attend regularly to Mass on Sundays and kept Holidays.†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MARTYRDOM OF A YOUNG LADY.

* The persecutions which the Christians underwent did not prevent them from celebrating the feasts of the Church. A Christian young lady was on her way to the assembly of the faithful, when one of the emperor Diocletian's guards perceiving her, was struck with her modesty: he went rudely up to her and said, "Stop!—whither are you going?" Fear-

ing, from the tone of his voice, that he intended to insult her, she made on her forehead the sign of the cross, in order to obtain the aid of Divine grace. The soldier deeming himself affronted by her silence, seized her violently, and said: "Speak! who are you? whither are you going?" She courageously replied: "I am a servant of Jesus Christ, and am going to the assembly of the Lord". "You shall not go!" said he, "you must sacrifice to the gods; to-day we worship the sun; you must worship him with us". He then attempted to pull off the veil which covered her face. This she endeavoured to prevent, and said, "Wretch! Jesus Christ will punish you!" At these words the soldier became furious, and drawing his sabre, plunged it into the heart of the Christian virgin. She fell bathed in her blood, but her holy soul flew to heaven, there to receive an unfading crown of glory.—*Fleury*.

CHRISTIANS MASSACRED FOR HEARING MASS.

† During the persecution of Diocletian, Saturninus, a priest of the town of Abitine, in Africa, was one Sunday celebrating secretly the Sacrifice of the Mass in the house of one Octavius Felix. The magistrates being informed of it, repaired to the house with a company of soldiers, and there arrested forty-nine Christians. They were at once led before them, and in their presence made a confession of Jesus Christ in such decisive terms as to elicit admiration at their courage, and then joyfully suffered martyrdom.

DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH.

† The impious Nicanor, that furious enemy of God's people, having resolved to attack the Jews on the Sabbath day, "the Jews that were constrained to follow him, said: Do not act fiercely and barbarously, but give honour to the day that is sanctified: and reverence Him that beholdeth all things". Then "that unhappy man", puffed up with an opinion of his own greatness and power, "asked if there were a Mighty One in heaven, that had commanded the Sabbath to be kept. And when they answered: There is, the living Lord Himself in heaven, the Mighty One, that commanded the seventh day to be kept holy. Then he said: And I am mighty upon the earth, and I am commanded to take arms, and to do the king's business. . . . But Machabeus ever trusted with all hope that God could help them. And he exhorted his people not to fear the coming of the nations. . . and now to hope for victory from the Almighty". Meanwhile, "Nicanor. and they that were with him, came forward with

trumpets and songs", and commenced the fight, But, in punishment of his impiety, his great army was totally overthrown by a handful, under the command of the valiant Judas; Nicanor himself was slain, with thirty-five thousand of his men, and his blasphemous tongue cut out, and given by pieces to birds.—II. *Machabees*. iv.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Has God given power to the Church to command the faithful?
2. Are we obliged to observe the six precepts of the Church?
3. Are the precepts of the Church closely connected with the Commandments of God?
4. Why are we often called on to say the Six Commandments of the Church?
5. Have the faithful been always obliged to hear Mass on Sundays?
6. In what manner should we hear Mass?
7. Is there anything besides the hearing of Mass required from us on Sundays?
8. Is the Rosary or Beads recommended on Sundays?
9. In spending the day in prayer and spiritual works, do we perform our chief duties on Sundays?
10. Are we obliged to be present during the entire sacrifice of the Mass?
11. Into how many parts is the Mass divided?
12. Are we obliged to attend at the four parts of the Mass?
13. Is it sinful to leave the church before the conclusion of the Mass?
14. If we cannot hear the entire of one Mass on Sunday, should we go to a second?
15. Do we fulfil the precept by hearing a part of one Mass, and then part of another?
16. Do masters and mistresses sin by hindering those under them from hearing Mass?

PRACTICE.

1. Have always a respect for the Church and her laws, and comply with her precepts with docility and submission, recollecting that it is God who speaks to you through the mouth of his pastors.

30 ON HOLY DAYS AND FAST DAYS.

2. Never forget that you are strictly bound to hear **Mass** on **Sundays** and **holidays**, and to hear it with **attention** and **devotion**.

3. If hitherto you have transgressed the precept of hearing **Mass**, resolve to be more exact in future.

PRAYER.

We thank Thee, O my God! for the very important instructions we have just now received. We have many duties to perform, of which the hearing of **Mass** on **Sundays** and **holidays** is not the least. We now regret that we have so often attended at **Mass** with dissipated and distracted minds; but we promise Thee that it shall be so no longer, but that in future we shall hear **Mass** with respect, attention, and devotion. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

ON HOLY DAYS AND FAST DAYS.

Q. What do you mean by Holy days?

A. Certain solemn days, ordered by the Church to be kept holy.

1. On each day of the year, the Church celebrates the feast of either one, or two, or three saints together; and on that day we recall to our minds the memory of their virtues. These feast days are, in general, but feasts of devotion, and we are not obliged to keep them holy. But there are some "certain solemn days", which the Church requires us to *keep holy*; and on those solemn festivals we are called on, as we are on **Sundays**, to give God honour and glory, and return Him thanks for His benefits to us.

2. Formerly there were a great many solemn feast days, which the Church obliged us to keep holy, by hearing Mass and refraining from servile works; but for many years past some of them only have been feasts of obligation, and the remaining have been *retrenched*. The feasts now "kept holy" in Ireland, are the feast of the Circumcision or New Year's Day, the feast of the Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, the festival of St. Patrick, the day of the Annunciation, Easter, Pentecost—the two latter always fall on Sunday—Ascension day, the feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the feast of All Saints, and the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, or Christmas Day.

Q. Why were Holy days instituted by the Church?

A. To recall to our minds, with praise and thanksgiving, the great mysteries of religion, and the virtues and rewards of the Saints, and to glorify God in them.

3. The Church instituted "Holy days" to recall to the minds of her children "the great mysteries of religion", and to keep up the continual remembrance of the great spiritual benefits we have received from God in the different mysteries of our Redemption, and to adore and thank God for them, as we would be very apt to forget them altogether, were it not for the return of these solemn feasts. Thus, the feast of the Nativity of our Lord has been instituted "to recall to our minds, with praise and thanksgiving, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ". The feast of the Epiphany recalls to our minds the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles—our ancestors—who lived in the darkness of paganism. The great Pas-

schal Solemnity, and the feast of the Ascension, “recall to our minds” the Resurrection and the Ascension of our Lord. The Feast of Pentecost “recalls to our minds” the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and the commencement of the establishment of the Christian religion. The feast of *Corpus Christi* has been instituted “to recall to our minds” the goodness of God, in giving Himself to us in the blessed Eucharist, and to pay honour, with the greatest pomp and solemnity, to the mystery of a God, who delights to dwell among the children of men under the veil of the adorable Eucharist.

4. But it is not merely “to recall to our minds the great mysteries of religion”, that the Church has instituted these glorious Festivals, but principally to excite our piety, fervour, and love, that we may “recall them to our minds with praise and thanksgiving” to God for His benefits to us. Each of these solemn Feasts has in view, in the celebration of the great mystery peculiar to it, our return of praise and thanksgiving to God. When, for example, we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, we should praise and thank God for His great love in coming down from the highest Heavens, assuming our poor human nature, and in being born in a poor mean stable, that Heaven may be opened to us, and that we may enter its gates, which had been so long closed against us. In celebrating the feast of *Corpus Christi*, we should “recall, with praise and thanksgiving”, the excessive love of God for us, in giving Himself to us in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

5. “Holy days” were also instituted by the Church, “to recall to our minds the virtues and rewards of the Saints, and to glorify God in them”. Yes, “Holy days”, or the great Feasts of the saints, were instituted, that we may recall to our minds the great virtues which they practised, and the glorious rewards

which they obtained ; and that from considering those great virtues and splendid rewards, we may be incited to follow their example—to make virtue the great object of our desires and the aim of all our pursuits. It is as if the Church said to us : *My children*, on to-day we celebrate the Feast of a glorious saint : think of the great reward of this saint in Heaven, and by what means he arrived at that happiness : follow the way which he has traced out for you—behold your model—do thou likewise.

6. The “Holy days”, or Feasts of the Saints, have, too, been instituted, that in “recalling to our minds” the virtues and rewards of the Saints, we should “glorify God in them”. It is God Himself that we honour and “glorify”, when we honour the Saints ; for we acknowledge that it is God who has made them Saints—that it is He who implanted in them these virtues, which gained for them an eternal reward—that their sanctity has flowed from the sanctity of God—that the good works which they performed during life, have been His, and that in crowning their merits, He has crowned His own gifts. The intention of the Church in appointing the Festivals of the Saints, is not principally to excite us to honour their memories ; but these Festivals are instituted to the end, that we, by “recalling to our minds the virtues and rewards of the saints”, may be efficaciously urged to make virtue the first object of our wishes—the great aim of all our pursuits—that we may be incited to walk in their footsteps ; in a word, that we may become Saints ourselves after their example, and thus “glorify God in them”, by the practice of those virtues which they exercised, and by copying the example which they have set us.

Q How are we to keep the Holy days ?

A: As we should keep the Sundays.

7. Holy days should be kept as we “keep the Sundays”; that is, we should hear Mass and refrain from servile work. A great part of the day should also be given to prayer—thanking God for the virtues with which He endowed, and the rewards which He bestowed on, the Saint whose Feast we are celebrating—reading his life, and reflecting on his words and deeds. On the “Holy days” we should pay particular devotion to the Saints—we should propose them as models for our imitation; for true and real devotion to the Saints is the imitation of the virtues which they practised through life. We should also beseech them to intercede for us with God—praying to the Blessed Virgin, and to that Saint whose Feast we are keeping, to obtain for us all the graces we stand in need of, and particularly the grace of following their example, and practising the virtues which rendered them friends of God. Let us unite our prayers with those of the entire Church, who invokes them on the days “kept holy”, and consecrated to their honour.

Q. What are we obliged to do by the second Commandment of the Church?

A. To give part of the year to fasting and abstinence.—*Matt.*, vi. 16, 17, 18.

8. “Fasting and abstinence” were always practised in the true Church, and are recommended in many parts of the sacred Scriptures. That *fasting* blots out sin and appeases the anger of God, the Holy Ghost Himself tells us. We read in the Old Testament that David, Achab, Tobias, Judith, Esther, Daniel, the Ninivites, and the Jewish people obtained of God, by “fasting and abstinence”, the pardon of their sins and other particular graces. “Be converted to me”, says the Lord to His people, in the Prophet Joel,

“with your whole hearts, in fasting and mourning”—*Joel*, ii. 12. In the New Testament there is mention made of the fasts of St. John the Baptist, and of the prophetess Anna. Jesus Christ Himself has given us an example of fasting, for we read in St. Matthew, iv. 1, that He retired into the desert, and there fasted forty days and forty nights. And in the same Gospel, xvii. 20, He says that certain sort of devils cannot be expelled except “by prayer and fasting”. The Apostles, as we read in the “Acts of the Apostles”, prepared themselves for the most important actions of their ministry, by prayer and fasting. St. Paul exhorts the faithful to fast, and practised it himself.

9. The part of the year given to “fasting and abstinence” are the forty days of Lent, the quarter Tenses, Rogation days, the vigils of certain solemn Feasts, and the Wednesdays and Fridays in Advent. At these times, the Fast imposed by the Church is of the most stringent obligation.

10. We fast during the forty days of Lent, to imitate Jesus Christ, who submitted to a rigorous fast in the desert for forty days, as we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew. The forty days of Lent are intended as a preparation for the worthy celebration of Easter, and those days we spend in *fasting* and *abstinence* that we may satisfy the justice of God by the mortification of our bodies. The fast of Lent can be traced as far back as the earliest age of the Church. There is mention made of it in the Apostolic Constitutions. St. Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom in the year 100 of the Christian era, makes mention of it in his Epistle to the Philippians; and St. Augustin says “the fast of forty days has not been instituted without good reason; for in fasting forty days, we imitate Moses, Elias, and our Lord Jesus Christ”.

11. The “Quarter Tenses” are those days which re

turn with the four seasons of the year, and which are consecrated to fasting and penance. On the return of each of these seasons, a week is appointed by the Church, on three days of which we fast and abstain—namely, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. In Spring, the first week of Lent is appointed; in Summer, the week immediately before Trinity Sunday; in Autumn, the third week of September; and in Winter, the third week of Advent is the one observed. These weeks are called the “Quarter Tenses”; and at this time the fast and abstinence are imposed both to sanctify each of the four seasons of the year, by giving thanks to God for the season which has just flown by, and to demand new favours for that which is about commencing, and also for the purpose of obtaining from the goodness of God *worthy ministers for His Church*. It is during the “Quarter Tenses” that the Sacrament of Orders is conferred by Bishops; and at that time, the whole Church is in fasting and penitence, to obtain of God good Priests, good pastors, and worthy Ministers, in the persons of those who are to be ordained and consecrated to the service of the sanctuary and the instruction of the faithful.†

12. The “Vigils” or the days immediately preceding the principal Festivals, are also “a part of the year given to fasting and abstinence”. These days are called “Vigils”, because in the early ages of the Church, the nights preceding the more solemn Festivals, were spent in prayer, in chanting the psalms, and in reading the Holy Books. The fast of the “Vigils” has been instituted to dispose our souls for the worthy celebration of the coming Festivals, that in mortifying by penance our bodies, and so raising our hearts more easily to spiritual and heavenly things, we may celebrate more worthily the great mysteries of religion. And why this? Because the

Church wishes that purity and innocence should be the principal disposition of her children in honouring the Lord, His Mysteries, and His Saints.

ST. AMBROSE'S ZEAL FOR THE SANCTITY OF FESTIVALS.

* When St. Ambrose was raised to the Episcopal See of Milan, he found that the diocese had been for many years neglected, and consequently fallen into a melancholy state of indifference. On the Feast days, public markets were held, and shows, exhibitions, and profane amusements of all sorts. The sanctity of these days was profaned by immorality and dissipation of every sort. He at once employed every means in his power to check such deplorable abuses, and made every effort to remove whatever could be an obstacle to the reformation which he contemplated. In a short time he found his labours crowned with success. The morals of the people underwent a total change: from being transgressors of the Sabbath they became, on the festivals set apart for the service of God, His zealous worshippers; the practices of religion took the place of plays and amusements, and every trace of the pagan superstitions had been completely removed.—*Alban Butler*.

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY A TREASURE

† In the life of St. John the Almoner, we are told that two tradesmen lived, one opposite the other, in a street in Alexandria, of which city John was Patriarch. One had a large family to support, for his children were many, and his parents were still alive, and yet he lived in ease and comfort. The other had no one to provide for, and yet, though he worked even on Sundays and Holidays, merely obtained for himself a miserable pittance. Jealous of his neighbour for the success that attended his labours, he one day asked him: "Why is it", said he, "that I, though labouring every day, not excepting even Sundays and Holidays, am so miserably poor, whilst you, who refrain from work on Holidays, are able to maintain so comfortable a position, with your large family to support?" "Ah!" replied his neighbour, "labour alone is not the cause of my success; there is a secret treasure to which I apply on Sundays and Holidays, and to that as well as to labour am I

indebted for my comfortable circumstances. This secret treasure I will disclose to you, and if you wish, divide with you". To this the other joyfully consented, and the following Sunday was the day fixed on for unfolding the secret treasure. When the morning of the Sabbath arrived, the poor artisan arrived according to promise, and felt most impatient to behold the secret treasure by which the other was enriched. "Follow me", said the latter, and he at once conducted him to the church, and having entered it, there addressed him: "There, my friend, is my treasure, and every Sunday I take home with me a part of it. This treasure is the blessing of the Lord. Let you also take your part of it; for this great Benefactor, who dwells in the highest Heavens, has sufficient for both". The poor artisan at once understood the nature of the advice given him—he followed it, and by his zeal in sanctifying the days consecrated to the Lord, rendered himself worthy of the blessings of Heaven; for the change which had taken place in his affairs, showed that his hope was well grounded.—*The Life of St. John the Almoner.*

HISTORY OF FASTS.

† A Catholic who had led a very criminal life, happened to read a book entitled *The History of Fasts*. He was particularly struck at learning how rigorously this duty was observed in the primitive ages of the Church, and thus reproached himself: "I call myself a Christian, and I have never fasted. Had I lived when the penitential canons were enforced to the letter, to how many years of fasting should I not have been condemned for the numberless sins which I have committed! The first Christians had no collation on their fasting days; all abstained from wine, and a great number contented themselves with bread and water; nor did they, before it was evening, take their only meal". What he had read made so deep an impression upon him, that it never escaped his memory, and constantly gave birth to new reflections. God, in the end, touched his heart. Penetrated with a lively sorrow for his sins, he determined to submit to the most rigorous penance. With this design, he entered into an austere monastery, where he observed the strictest silence, fasted continually with the utmost rigour, slept on a hard bed, and interrupted his sleep, during a great portion of the night, to sing the praises of God.—*Lasousse.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are we obliged to keep all Festivals holy?
2. What are the Festivals that we should keep holy?
3. For what end has the Church appointed Holidays?
4. Have Holidays been appointed for returning thanks to God?
5. For what other end have Holidays been instituted?
6. When we honour the Saints, do we honour God?
7. In what manner are the Holidays to be kept?
8. Is fasting recommended in the Old and the New Testament?
9. What parts of the year are given to fasting and abstinence?
10. Why do we observe the fast of Lent?
11. What do you call Ember days, and why fast on those days?
12. What do you mean by vigils, and why fast on them?

PRACTICE.

1. When hearing Mass on Holidays, think often of the rewards of the Saints in Heaven.
2. On the Festivals of the Saints, often recall to your mind the virtues they practised on this earth, and resolve to imitate them.
3. Always entertain the greatest respect for the precept of fasting, as being imposed by the Church of God.

PRAYER.

We now regret, dear Lord! that we have spent the Holidays and the Feasts of the Saints in profane amusements. We have altogether forgotten the sanctity of those days, and instead of meditating on the virtues of the saints, and praying to them to intercede with God for us, we have spent them in games, sports, and amusements most displeasing to Thee. We now promise, dear Lord, that these feast days we shall in future sanctify, and spend them in a manner pleasing to Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

ON FASTING AND ABSTINENCE.

Q. What do you mean by Fast days?

A. Certain days on which we are allowed but one meal, and forbidden flesh meat.

1. *Fasting* means not partaking of our usual food, either as to the quantity or quality of it. A "Fast day" is a day on which we are obliged to diminish the usual quantity of our food, and at the same time abstain from eating flesh meat of every description. On a "Fast day" we cannot take two meals, nor can we take at the one meal anything of the nature of "flesh meat".

Q. What do you mean by days of Abstinence?

A. Certain days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh meat, but are allowed the usual number of meals.

2. "Days of abstinence" are, as your Catechism tells you, dear children, those days on which we are forbidden by the Church to eat meat, take soup, or partake of anything extracted from the flesh of animals, though on those days we can use the same quantity of food—*not animal*—as we do on any other day, and partake of that food as often in the day as we please. Friday, for example, is a "day of abstinence", but not a "Fast day", in the strict sense of the word; for although on that day "we are forbidden to eat flesh meat", or to partake of anything extracted from flesh meat, yet we are not forbidden to take the "usual number of meals", as we can eat at every hour, if it so pleases us.

Q. Can we take on Fast days a slight collation, together with one full meal?

A. Yes; it is now generally permitted.

3. Towards the twelfth century, permission was given in some monasteries, to take, in the evening, a glass of water, or a glass of wine mixed with water, as the religious felt very much exhausted from the chanting of the psalms and from severe manual labour. As this slight refreshment, to which afterwards was added a little bread, was taken at the time of the *collation* or conference, it was called on that account a "collation". Such has been the origin of that refection, which, on Fast days, we take in the evening, and such also is the etymology of the name given to it.

4. With regard to the quantity of food which may be taken at the "collation", some lay it down as a rule, that it should not exceed seven ounces. Others are of opinion that the "collation" should be the fourth part of an ordinary meal; and a great many others think, that no fixed rule can be laid down for all persons, but that the quantity should be determined by each one's necessity. But, according to the common teaching of divines, the "collation" must not exceed eight ounces of food.

5. St. Alphonsus Liguori, quoting the opinion of some divines, who permit a quarter of the usual full meal to be taken at "collation", says: "But of this rule I do not approve, because either it might possibly be too indulgent (at least with respect to some persons) or is at best not very clear, and liable to cause scruples. It is better, therefore, to follow the opinion given by other divines, which is commonly received at the present day, and which allows eight ounces to all persons indiscriminately, even to those who require but little food" (*Hom. Apost. tract. 12*,

n. 16). And in his Moral Theology he says : “The quantity of eight ounces is so adopted in practice at the present day, that it is indiscriminately allowed even to those whose appetite is fully satisfied”. In this country, custom has authorised us to take the *collation* in the morning, and also something at night. What is thus taken at night, must be but a little—one ounce, or at most two ounces.

6. As to the quality, or nature of the food allowed at “collation”, the practice of the early ages was, that nothing should be taken except dry fruits ; but custom has long since modified the rule, and has allowed for “collation”, bread, vegetables, salads, and other similar things ; but flesh meat, or anything produced from animals, as milk, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., cannot be used. In some countries, however, milk is allowed at “collation” : each person in this matter, should attend to the regulations of the diocese in which he lives, and act according to the practice there adopted.

Q. Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain ?

A. To mortify our sinful passions and appetites, and to satisfy for our sins by doing penance for them.

7. The Church commands us to fast, that we may “mortify our sinful passions and appetites” ; for fasting and abstinence have a particular virtue in disengaging our hearts from earthly things—from the objects of our passions, and from too great an attachment to creatures. Intemperance clogs the soul—renders the soul altogether earthly, carnal, and beastly, so stupid and dull as to be, in a great measure, incapable of spiritual functions ; but *fasting*

tames the violence of our passions, weakens temptations, renders the soul more spiritual—more fit for prayer, meditation, and other religious exercises. Fasting bridles concupiscence, quenches the flames of lust, restrains the violence of the passions, tames the rebellious flesh, and heals the disorders of the body as well as of the soul.

8. It was by *fasting* that the holy martyrs rendered themselves terrible to the devil, and impenetrable to all his fiery darts. It was by *fasting* that they triumphed over their passions, defeated the spiritual enemies of their souls, and arrived at the greatest virtue. It was by *fasting* that Jesus Christ prepared Himself for combating against Satan in the desert. He had neither faults to expiate, nor passions to suppress, nor evil inclinations to destroy, nor even virtue to acquire, as He was holiness itself; but He was willing to teach us by His example with what weapons we are to arm and defend ourselves against the assaults and temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh. All this proves the necessity and signal advantages of fasting.

9, "To satisfy for our sins by doing penance for them" is another reason why the Church commands us "to fast and abstain". That fasting is a most powerful means to disarm the justice of God, and "to satisfy for our sins", appears clearly from several parts of the sacred Scriptures. The Old Testament informs us that God Himself enjoined fasting on sinners, expressly exhorting them by His prophets to be converted with their whole hearts, "in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning". The memorable Fast of the Ninivites, the Fast of King Ahab and King David, prove beyond a doubt that fasting is a necessary and powerful means to avert the indignation of God. Our Saviour assures us that after His ascension His followers should fast: "The

days will come", says He, "when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast"—*Matt.*, ix. 15. He also gives us rules about the intention with which we ought to fast, and promises a reward for doing it: "When thou fastest", says He, "anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father who is in secret will repay thee"—*Matt.*, vi. 17, 18. St. Paul requires fasting, among other virtues, as necessary to make us true servants of God, and exhorts us to practise it: "Let us in all things", says he, "exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in labours, in watchings, in fastings"—*I. Cor.*, vi. 4.

10. Though we were assured by an Angel from Heaven of our having obtained pardon of our sins by virtue of the holy Sacrament of Penance, yet this should not encourage us to neglect the duties of fasting, abstinence, and such like penitential and satisfactory works; because, though our sins should be supposed to be forgiven, both as to the guilt and the eternal punishment due to them in hell, there might still remain, and usually does remain, some debt of temporal punishment to be atoned for, either in this life or in the next, until we shall have paid the very *last farthing* to the justice of God, as the Gospel tells us. This shows how incumbent it is on us all to fast and abstain, and lead a penitential life. You are to fast, says St. Basil, because you have sinned; and you are to fast, likewise, in order to prevent the danger of falling again into sin—fasting being not only a powerful means to obtain pardon of sins committed, but a most effectual remedy to overcome temptations and defeat the malice of the devil.

Q. Does the Church oblige all her members to fast?

A. The law of Fasting obliges all the faithful who have

arrived at the age of twenty-one, except those who are exempted by sickness, the weakness of their constitutions, by laborious employments, by old age, or any other valid reasons.

11. Both Almighty God and His Church, in laying upon us the obligation of fasting, intend by it to promote the real good of our souls, but by no means to destroy, or even impair, the health of our bodies, or to hinder us from the lawful employments of our state of life. On this account, all those are exempted from the law of fasting, whose state of health, or weakness of age, or the necessary duties of their state of life, render fasting improper for them.

12. In the first place, then, *weakness of age* exempts persons from the law of Fasting, such as young people under the age of twenty-one, because till about that age, nature requires full sustenance for the growth of the body. In the second place, *infirmity* exempts from that law; for the Church is a tender mother, and does not wish to injure the health of her children. Hence she exempts from the law of fasting the sick and the infirm; women pregnant, and those who give suck, because they have to support and nourish their children as well as themselves; old people—and all those who have arrived at the age of sixty are, according to the general opinion of divines, to be accounted old—who are able to take but a little at a time, but require it frequently, and generally all those who cannot fast without a great inconvenience. In the third place, *toil and labour*, which are incompatible with fasting, exempt from the law. People, therefore, whose state of life subjects them to much labour of body, which requires full nourishment to support them under it, such as husbandmen, smiths, masons, carpenters, and others, such also as persons who are obliged to make long journeys upon foot, or assist the sick, and generally all those who by fasting are unable to fulfil the

duties of their state of life, are not bound by the law of Fasting.

13. But though all these are exempted from the obligations of fasting as to quantity, yet still they are obliged to observe the rules of abstinence, unless some particular reason require the contrary, as is often the case with people in sickness, when not only the quantity, but also the quality of the food must be allowed, as their distemper, according to the opinion of physicians, may require it. On the other hand, where a person, on account of his health, is dispensed from the rule of abstinence, yet he is still obliged to observe the rule of fasting, as to the quantity, unless some other cause require a dispensation in this also.

Q. Why does the Church command us to abstain from flesh meat on Friday?

A. In honour and commemoration of our Saviour's death.

14. We "abstain from flesh meat on Friday" in honour of God's great mercy in dying for us on that day, in "commemoration" of His painful and agonizing death. As our Lord Jesus Christ endured pain, sorrow, and suffering on Friday—the last day of His life—and breathed forth His last sigh in the midst of reproaches, raileries, and mockeries, the Church, wishing to bring to our minds on every Friday the recollection of all these sufferings—the stripes, the nailing of His hands and feet, the bitter draught of vinegar and gal, the last painful sigh, has required of her children that they should abstain from flesh meat.

15. Friday has always been with her a day of penance and mortification, because it was on that day Jesus Christ died to redeem us, and it is just that we

should share in His sufferings, if we aspire to partake of the graces of His redemption. For this reason, in the primitive Church every Friday was a Fast day; but this was afterwards reduced to a simple Abstinence, and the Church made it a law to which every Christian is bound to submit. Children, even, are not exempt from this law when they can observe it; and nothing less than real necessity can dispense with it before God.

16. Let us always observe this holy precept. Let not the fear of being ridiculed or laughed at ever induce us to violate it. Recollect what our Saviour says: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels"—*Mark*, viii. 38. And as there is no part of Christ's doctrine which He more strongly inculcates than obedience to His Church, if we be ashamed of obeying her, for fear of the laughter of men, Christ will be ashamed of us on the Last Day. If we stand firm to our duty in this respect, though others may banter us a little on that account yet in their hearts, and when they speak seriously, they will esteem and regard us the more.

Q. What answer can you give to Protestants when they quote St. Paul as saying, "It is not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth the man", and say flesh is as good on Friday as on other days?

A. That they misapply the text, and in making this objection show their own gross ignorance.

17. The eating of flesh meat "on Fridays and other forbidden days", is not sinful in itself, for there is nothing bad in flesh meat at those times more than at any other time; but the sin consists in disobeying the commands of the Church, and in preferring our

own appetite, and the fear of what men will say, to the will of the most high God, and to the obedience which we owe to His Church. The apple that Eve eat was in itself good; but because it was *forbidden*, and because Adam and Eve eat it against the command of God, it defiled them. The eating of blood and strangled meats *defiled* the Christians of the early ages, because the Apostle St. Paul prohibited the eating of them. Eating leavened bread on certain days defiled the Jews, because it was *forbidden* on those days; yet, in itself, it was as good on the forbidden days as at other times. Eleazer, and the seven Machabees with their mother, suffered death sooner than be *defiled* by eating swine's flesh, which was prohibited at that time.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

△ CHILD'S RESPECT FOR THE LAWS OF THE CHURCH.

* In a city of France, a child, whose parents were strangers to the practice of religion, was preparing himself to receive, for the first time, the holy Sacrament of the Altar; and as it was usual in his parents' house to eat meat every day, without distinction, he accused himself of this with his other sins. His confessor gave him suitable directions for his future conduct, and these the child promised faithfully to obey. His fidelity was soon tested: on the Friday following meat was served up, which, on being presented to him, he modestly refused, alleging the prohibition of the Church, and expressing, at the same time, his desire of a little bread instead. His father, enraged at his refusal, inhumanly ordered him to be shut up without a morsel of food till the following day. The poor child submitted without complaint, and without betraying the least ill-humour. His mother, although as irreligious as her husband, felt compassion for him, and towards evening, carried to him privately some food, reprehending him, at the same time, for his opposition to his father's wishes and to her own. "Dear mother," replied the

excellent boy, "had my father commanded me anything, the performance of which was not unlawful, I would have cheerfully obeyed; and although I refused to comply with his wishes, it certainly was not through obstinacy. He ordered me to remain here till to-morrow without food, and this I can do without sin; but you will not be displeased, I hope, at my not accepting what you have been so good as to bring me". His mother, astonished at hearing him give expression to sentiments so religious and respectful, could not restrain her tears, and going instantly to her husband, related what she had just heard. Struck with admiration, he mingled his tears with hers, and both acknowledged that their son was more rational and virtuous than themselves. Then going to where he was confined, the father tenderly embraced him, expressed his regret at having treated him with such severity, and inquired who had instructed and so prudently advised him. Being informed, he shortly after waited on the confessor to testify to him his gratitude for the care he had taken of his son, and begged of him to hear his own confession. Thenceforward he was as remarkable for his strict observance of the laws of the Church, as he had before been for his neglect of them; and his wife became equally devout and observant. Happy child, that thus opened his parents' eyes to the danger of the course they were pursuing, and led them into the secure way of obedience and mortification! — *Marguet.*

THE AUSTERITIES AND FASTS OF THE PENITENTS OF FORMER DAYS.

† St. John Climachus thus relates some circumstances of the austerity and rigour of certain penitents whom he found in a certain monastery. "Coming into this monastery, I beheld there things which the eye of the slothful had never seen, the ear of the negligent had never heard, and the heart of the sluggard will never be able to comprehend. I saw there actions and words capable, if I may so speak, to do violence to the Almighty, and bring down His mercy in a moment. There one might have seen these holy penitents, full of sorrow and bowed down to the earth, who, contemning all care of their flesh, mingled their bread with ashes, and their drink with tears. Many of them had their tongues protruded through the extremity of the thirst that tormented them. Some there were, that in the height of summer stood parching in the sun's most violent heat; and others, on the contrary, in the depth of winter suffered themselves to freeze

with intense cold. Some took a little water to refresh their tongues, but not sufficient to quench their thirst; and others contented themselves with a morsel of bread—refusing more—saying they were not worthy to eat the food of men since they had lived the lives of beasts. ‘Let us’, they said, ‘not spare our filthy flesh—let us revenge on it the excesses it has committed, and let us make it bear the punishment it has been the cause of’. Their countenances represented rather dead than living persons; their eyes were filmy and sunken; the flesh of their cheeks appeared shrivelled, and, as it were parched with the scalding tears they shed. I know not how I was able to continue so long hearing and witnessing all these things. I stayed there thirty days wholly astonished at what I saw”.—*S. Joan. Clim. grad. 5.*

THE BEAUTIFUL REPLY OF LOUIS XVI.

‡ The first year of his reign Louis XVI. said to his courtiers:—“I have not spent the Lent well this year; but next year I will have more merit, for then I will be in my twenty-first year, and I will fast”. “But, sire”, answered one of the courtiers, “your majesty will not be able to fast, for are you not to hunt during the season?” “The chase”, replied the king, “is only an amusement, and I will forego it, if it be an obstacle to my obeying the laws of the Church”. This good and benevolent monarch, when in the hands of his enemies, was treated in the harshest manner, and was obliged to submit to many humiliations. His executioners, who gloried in their sacrileges against the Church, as well as against their sovereign, laid meat before him for dinner on Friday. The king silently endured this insult, and offered no remonstrance, but taking a glass of water, he dipped into it a little bread, and sighing uttered these words—*This is my dinner.—Life of Louis XVI.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is meant by a Fast day?
2. What is meant by a day of Abstinence?
3. What is the origin of the word collation, allowed Fast days?
4. What quantity of food may be taken at collation?

5. What is the opinion of St. Liguori with regard to the quantity to be taken at collation?
6. What quality of food is allowed at collation?
7. Why are we commanded by the Church to fast and abstain?
8. What benefits have the saints derived from fasting?
9. Is fasting a powerful means of averting the wrath of God?
10. What say our Lord and St. Paul on fasting?
11. If we be free from sin, are we obliged to fast?
12. Are any persons exempted from the law of Fasting?
13. What are the causes which exempt us from the law of Fasting?
14. Are persons exempted from the law of Fasting bound to abstain?
15. Why is it that we abstain from flesh meat on Fridays?
16. What do you say to those who eat flesh meat on Fridays through human respect?
17. Is it the mere eating of meat on Friday that is sinful?

PRACTICE.

1. Be careful in observing the laws of Fasting, if age and health do not exempt you.
2. If you cannot, from delicacy of constitution, fast and abstain, fast in desire, and offer to God your sickness, your sufferings, and your daily toil and labour.
3. When you fast, unite your fasting to the fast of Jesus Christ, for the expiation of your sins.

PRAYER.

Thou hast said, O Lord, in Thy Gospel, that *he who does not hear the Church* should be considered as a heathen and a publican. We dread that terrible malediction, and to remove it we shall for evermore listen attentively to what the Church orders, and obey promptly her precepts and ordinances. We regret, dear Lord! that there are many, too many, calling themselves Catholics, who make no account of the laws of Thy Church, but habitually transgress them. Preserve us, O Lord! from a similar misfortune, and so aid us that we may be prepared to make any sacrifice sooner than transgress those laws of the Church. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

ON ANNUAL CONFESSION AND PASCHAL COMMUNION.

Q. What means the Commandment of confessing our sins at least once a year?

A. It means that we are threatened with very severe penalties by the Church, if we do not go to confession within the year.

1. "The Commandment of confessing our sins" is a divine precept; and it is Jesus Christ Himself who obliges sinners to confess their sins, in order that they may receive forgiveness of them. And as He has instituted Confession as the ordinary means by which our sins are to be forgiven, and by which we are to be restored to His friendship, it follows, of course, that he obliges all to receive the Sacrament of Penance, otherwise their sins cannot be forgiven. When we come to treat of the Sacrament of Penance, we shall speak more at large on this subject. We shall merely add, in this place, that during many centuries the precept of Confession had been faithfully observed; but by degrees Christians began to relax in this holy practice, and a great number soon gave it up altogether. Then to remedy so great an evil, and one attended with so many disastrous consequences, the Church enacted a law, by which she obliged all her children to confess their sins "at least once a year", having previously prepared themselves for the reception of so great a Sacrament. In the year 1215, in the Fourth Council of Lateran, this law was enacted; but it should not be consi-

dered as a new obligation imposed on the faithful, but only as a determination and an execution of the divine Precept. The annual confession prescribed "by the Church" in this decree should be accompanied with the necessary dispositions—that is, it should be made with sorrow for having committed sin, and with a firm resolution of not sinning any more.

2. If we do not confess "our sins at least once a year", and receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, the Church threatens us "with very severe penalties". These penalties which the Church threatens us with are, dear children, very severe indeed. They are no less than exclusion from the house of God whilst we live, and being deprived of Christian burial when we die. Severe, truly, are these punishments with which the Council of Lateran threatens us, if we disobey the Command of the Church, by not "confessing our sins at least once a year".*

Q. Does a bad Confession satisfy the obligation of confessing our sins once a year?

A. So far from it, that it renders us more guilty by the additional crime of sacrilege.

3. A "bad Confession" by no means satisfies "the obligation of confessing our sins once a year"; for the Church never intended that its Precept should be fulfilled by a "bad confession", but on the contrary ordained that we should confess our sins *faithfully*, that is, with sincerity and sorrow. To approach the Sacrament of Penance without having made a due examination of conscience, and without true sorrow, is so far from fulfilling the precept of the Church, obliging us to "confess our sins at least once a year", that it adds a new sin, the crime of sacrilege, to our load of guilt. Hence it follows, that he who had the misfortune to make his annual Confession without

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being properly disposed, should in his next Confession not only accuse himself of the sacrilege he had committed, but also of having violated the precept of the Church.†

Q. Is it sufficient to go but once a year to Confession ?

A. No ; frequent Confession is necessary for all those who fall into mortal sin, or who desire to advance in virtue.

4. "To go but once a year to Confession" is all that the Church expressly *commands* ; but not all that she *wishes*. Her great desire and wish is, that we should approach the tribunal of Penance frequently, to obtain there a remedy for the many wounds inflicted on our souls by sin ; and she unceasingly exhorts us to this by the mouth of her Ministers. No, it is "not sufficient to go but once a year to confession", as even "frequent confession is necessary for all those who fall into mortal sin". When we have fallen into mortal sin, God requires us to return to Him without delay, by sincere repentance : "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day ; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee"—*Ecclus.*, v. 8, 9.

5. Those who have fallen into mortal sin, must, therefore, return immediately to God by repentance, and wash away their sins by Confession. Sin is a malady more dangerous than any that can affect the body. When the body is attacked by sickness, do we delay an entire year to call in the physician ? and is it not exposing oneself to die in mortal sin, to pass almost a whole life in that alarming state. Whenever, then, dear children, we have been so unfortunate as to fall into mortal sin, we should at once go to Confession,

and not delay going for a whole year. The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "There is nothing which ought to be an object of so much care to the faithful as to study to purify their souls by frequent confession of their sins. For when any one is oppressed with any deadly sin, nothing can be to him more salutary than to confess his sins immediately, on account of the many dangers which hang over our lives"—*Cat. Conc. Trid., part 2, cap. 5.†*

6. For those, too, "who desire to advance in virtue", frequent Confession is necessary; for Confession is not only a remedy for sins already committed, but it is also a *preservative* against the commission of them in future. When one has contracted a habit of sin, and on that account is guilty of repeated falls, frequent Confession is to such a most powerful help, and sometimes the only means by which he can overcome the violent temptations by which he is assailed. If, therefore, we desire to reform our conduct, and "advance in virtue", it should be our chief care to frequent the Sacrament of Penance, by going to confession on the vigils of the principal Feasts of the year, and also once a month, for experience shows us that Confession made but "once a year" is not sufficient for us, if we are desirous of leading a Christian life.

Q. At what time should we make the annual confession?

A. About the time of Lent, that it may serve as a preparation for Easter Communion.

7. The Church has not fixed the precise time of the year at which the annual Confession should be made; but as it is commanded in the same canon as the Paschal Communion, we may infer that she desires it should be made about the time that we are preparing to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter. It is the common opinion of theologians, that we

should confess at Paschal time ; as it is at that time that we are obliged to receive the blessed Eucharist, and the proper receiving of it requires that we should be free, at least, from the guilt of mortal sin. Besides, the Paschal time is the time prescribed for annual Confession in all the rituals ; and a great number of Provincial and Diocesan Councils have made it a matter of obligation ; and in every place such has been the custom observed.

Q. At what age are children obliged to go to Confession ?

A. As soon as they are capable of committing sin ; that is, when they come to the use of reason, which is generally supposed to be about the age of seven years.

8. Children are obliged to go to Confession “when they come to the use of reason” ; for at that time they are capable of committing sin, being able to distinguish good from evil, vice from virtue. The time “when they come to the use of reason” is when they are “about the age of seven years”. Some children come to the use of reason at an earlier age ; and others do not arrive at it till a later. But, generally speaking, when children are about seven years old, they should go to Confession, and their parents should lead them to the Confessional, or get others to accompany them, for though they may not at that age be guilty of sin, yet they will receive from the Confessor those salutary admonitions which will contribute to their perseverance in virtue, and strengthen them against the temptations of the enemy.

Q. Where and from whom are we to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter ?

A. In our own Parish, and from our own Pastor.

9. The fourth precept of the Church ordains, that each one of the faithful should receive worthily the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within a certain specified time about Easter. In Ireland the time prescribed for complying with this Paschal Precept commences on Ash-Wednesday, and terminates on the octave day of the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. What occasioned the Church to make this law, was the indifference shown by many Christians for this august Sacrament, notwithstanding the declaration of our Lord: "Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you"—*John*, vi. 54. The Christians of the early ages of the Church communicated frequently; they considered the Holy Eucharist as the daily bread of the children of God; they felt no sorrow greater than that of being deprived of this divine Food. Soon, however, their charity began to grow cold, the Holy Table to be less frequented, and many, for several years, neglected to approach it. To prevent so great a disorder, the Church requires all her children, under "very severe penalties", to receive the Holy Communion at least at Easter or thereabouts, and that "in our own Parish and from our own Pastor".

10. To satisfy the Precept of Paschal Communion, we must receive the Blessed Eucharist "in our own Parish", that is, in the Parish to which we belong. We may go to Confession in any Parish we may choose, and to any Priest, approved of by the Bishop, we may select; but, the Paschal Communion, to comply with the Precept of the Church, must be received "in our own Parish and from our own Pastor". A great many decisions of Sovereign

Pontiffs and of Councils have been given with regard to this subject. Clement XIII. in his decree published in the year 1592, emphatically declares, that the faithful may, even in Lent and during the Paschal time, confess their sins to Regulars, approved by the Bishop; but that they must communicate at the Paschal time in their own Parish, and at the hands of their own Pastor. And why are such conditions required? Because it is meet that children of the same family should be united at the same table to eat of the Paschal Lamb. It is meet that each Flock should be assembled together under their own Shepherd; for so he shall the better know his Sheep, and direct them more surely in the way of salvation;—he shall see who they are that comply with the Precept of the Church, and who are those who do not acquit themselves of this important duty.*

11. By “our own Parish” is meant the place in which we live; but if a person has two places of residence, in different Parishes, and lives equally in one as in the other, he can receive the Paschal Communion in either. But if he resides principally in one, his Paschal Communion should be received there. Persons who have no fixed residence, but are constantly moving from one place to another, can receive the Paschal Communion in any Parish in which they may be during the Easter time.

Q. At what age are children obliged to receive the Blessed Eucharist?

A. As soon as they are able to *discern the body of the Lord*; that is, when they understand what the Blessed Eucharist is, and how they should be prepared to receive it worthily.—I. Cor., xi. 20.

* According to the general discipline now practised, we can receive the Paschal Communion in our own Church from the hands of any Priest.

12. Children are obliged to receive the Blessed Eucharist "as soon as they are able to discern the body of the Lord", that is, when they are capable of understanding "what the Blessed Eucharist is", and the difference between this divine Food and earthly bread. Some children are capable of understanding "what the Blessed Eucharist is" at an earlier age than others. But ordinarily speaking, children in this country are not obliged to go to Communion before the age of ten, eleven, or twelve years ; but their first Communion should not be deferred beyond the age of fourteen years. It is about this age that children "are able to discern the body of the Lord"; at an earlier age, there is reason to fear that, generally, they are incapable of comprehending the excellence of the Adorable Eucharist, and of duly disposing themselves for the reception of so great a Sacrament. But for children in danger of death, theologians, along with Benedict XIV., commonly teach, that so great an age is not necessary, and that the Blessed Eucharist may be given to them if they are capable of making their Confession.

13. But at whatever age children "are able to understand what the Eucharist is, and how they should be prepared to receive it worthily", they should be induced to approach the sacred Body of our Lord, and every precaution should be taken by the pastors of their souls that they may approach and partake of the Holy Table with the most lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity. The first Communion of children is to them a matter of the most vital importance. If it be received in their early years with sentiments of faith, love, and piety, there is every reason to hope that in after years they will not approach the sacred Banquet with indifference and irreverence, but will always show by their becoming demeanour and respectful posture when about re-

ceiving their God, that their respect, love, and affection for Him, so far from waxing cold, has grown with their growth, and that in proportion as they advanced in years, they advanced in the love and fear of God.

Q. What punishment has the Church decreed against those who neglect to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter?

A. They are to be excluded from the house of God whilst living, and deprived of Christian burial when they die.—*21st Can. Coun. Lat.*

14. "Those who neglect to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter" are, according to the decree passed in the Council of Lateran, to be excluded "from the house of God"—that is, not allowed to enter God's Church, but forced to remain before the doors, as unworthy to enter and participate in the prayers and good works of the faithful. This is the terrible penalty threatened by our holy mother the Church against us, if we transgress the Precept of receiving the Blessed Eucharist at Easter. In threatening this severe penalty, she acts like a wise and merciful mother, exerting every means to induce her rebellious children to enter into themselves and return to her in a spirit of obedience and humility. But if they continue obstinate in their sin, and die in that state, she deprives them of "Christian burial"—she will not allow their ashes to mingle with those of the just, but ever to moulder away in unconsecrated ground, like the remains of the beasts of the field.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE NOBLEMAN DEFERRING REPENTANCE.

* Venerable Bede, in his "History of England", relates that Conrad, a pious prince, had among his courtiers a nobleman, to whom, on account of his great services, he was much attached, but who, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of the prince, remained several years without approaching the sacred tribunal of Penance. Being attacked with a very dangerous illness, the king visited him, and implored him to send for a confessor, but could not prevail on him to do so. Visiting him a second time, he found him at the last extremity, and conjured him not to die without seeking reconciliation with God. The unfortunate man, having remained some time without replying, at length looked at the king in the most frightful manner, and said, "It is no longer time; I am lost; hell is my portion for eternity!" Pronouncing these awful words, he expired in impenitence and despair.

THE PASTOR AND THE FALSE PENITENT.

† A man who had been leading a very irregular life, waited on his parish priest, and told him he was desirous of complying with his Easter duty. The pastor applauded his good intention, but desired him to remember that the precept required that he should receive *worthily*. "I wish", said the man, "to communicate to-morrow". "I have reason to believe", said the priest, "you are not sufficiently disposed for that; I never see you at Mass either on Sundays or holidays; I have been told you frequently work on those days, and that you are altogether regardless of the fasts of the Church". "I fast always on Good Friday, sir", said the man. "Yes", replied the pastor, "and you drink to intoxication on other days, and you have instructed your children so well that they curse and swear like yourself". "Sir," said the parishioner, "I acknowledge that I have been very wicked, but I wish to confess and to receive communion at the time prescribed". "Your confession", replied the pastor, "may commence forthwith, but as to the Paschal communion, you cannot be permitted to receive it until you have amended your life".—*Lasausse*.

DEFERRING CONFESSION UNTIL EASTER.

† A clergyman, speaking to his flock on the folly of delaying their conversion, related to them the following para-

ble :—On my way hither to exercise the duties of my ministry, I beheld a most afflicting spectacle—a young man thrown precipitately on the highway, his carriage broken, and he himself, though not dead, yet suffering in every member of his body intense torture. The people approached him, sympathised with him, and begged of him to accept the aid of a physician. “A physician!” said he; “yes; at Easter I will have a physician”. Judge of the astonishment of the spectators: they imagined he had lost his senses. Be not surprised, my brethren, when I ask you, are you not like this unfortunate, foolish man? Have you not been running precipitately in the way of vice?—have you not even suffered a dreadful fall? your more noble part—your soul—is it not more than wounded? is it not dead? We speak to you of a physician who is all-powerful, not of himself, but through the mission he has received from God, and who can bring that soul again to life; and you say, “At Easter—at Easter, I will have recourse to the physician”. And how many are there among you, dearest brethren, who do not put even this limit to your delay? This comparison made a lively impression on the minds of the auditors, many of whom approached, soon after, the tribunal of Penance.—*Mercat.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is confessing our sins an obligation imposed on us by God?
2. Are we threatened with severe penalties if we do not confess once a-year?
3. Can we fulfil the precept of annual Confession by a bad Confession?
4. Should we go to Confession more frequently than once a-year?
5. After having committed mortal sin, should we go to Confession immediately?
6. Is frequent Confession a great means of advancing in virtue?
7. At what time of the year should the annual Confession be made?
8. At what age should children make their first Confession?

9. Are we obliged to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter?

10. Are we bound to receive the Blessed Eucharist in our own Parish?

11. What do you mean by our own parish?

12. At what age should children receive the Blessed Eucharist?

13. Should children be well prepared for their first Communion?

14. With what punishment has the Church threatened those who neglect their Easter duty?

PRACTICE.

1. Be always careful in fulfilling the precept of annual Confession.

2. Prepare yourself at the commencement of Lent for your Paschal Communion.

3. Beg of God, during the Lent, the grace of receiving worthily the Paschal Communion.

PRAYER.

We give thee thanks, O God ! for the instruction which we have just received. We have now learned the obligation under which we lie of going to confession at least once a-year, and of receiving the holy communion at Easter. Divine Saviour ! was it necessary that we should be commanded to fulfil this loving duty ? Can there be a greater privilege than to be allowed to approach Thy holy table ? Ah ! cold, indeed, and ungrateful, must we be, to require to be commanded to receive our good God into our breasts ! Pardon, dear Lord, our past indifference, and we shall in future approach Thee often and fervently. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SUPPORT OF OUR PASTORS, AND ON CLANDESTINE MARRIAGES.

Q. Are we obliged, in conscience and justice, to contribute to the support of our pastors ?

A. Yes ; and by a divine precept also. St. Paul says : “ So the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel ”—I. *Cor.*, ix. 13, 14.

1. The fifth Precept of the Church obliges us “ to contribute to the support of our Pastors ” ; and to perform that duty we are “ obliged, in conscience and justice ”, for Pastors are our spiritual Fathers, and are continually labouring for our eternal welfare. As they give up their whole time and labour to the spiritual welfare of our souls, we should, in turn, supply their temporal wants. The duties of our Pastors are many and weighty. They are obliged to offer up daily prayers, and frequent Sacrifices, for the people under their spiritual charge. They are obliged to instruct the ignorant, to preach the Gospel, to assist the sick and dying, to comfort the afflicted, to administer the last Sacraments, and to be ready, at all times, both night and day, to answer the calls of their Flocks, when their spiritual need requires their aid.

2. And that they may have nothing to take up their minds or time from these essential duties, they are prohibited from entering into the married state, lest the cares and solitudes that attend that state should hinder them from the necessary duties

which they owe to God and their people. They are also strictly forbidden to follow any worldly business, trade, or employment; because, were they engaged in any of these, they neither could attend to the service of God as their office requires them, nor to the necessary care of the souls of their people. When, therefore, a person following the vocation of God, engages in the state of the Priesthood, and out of zeal for the salvation of souls, gives himself up altogether to the service of his Flock, the people are "obliged in conscience and justice to contribute to the support" of the Priest; for, if not supported by the people, for whom he toils day and night, how is he to live?—how is he to be maintained? He is not an Angel, who requires no food. He is composed, like other men, of a frail, corruptible body, which must be supported. He cannot enter on the ordinary ways of making a livelihood for himself; for his whole time and employment is taken up with the duties he owes to God and his flock.

3. It therefore follows plainly, from the very light of nature itself, that those who receive the spiritual fruit of his labours for the good of their souls, are "obliged, in conscience and justice", to supply his temporal requirements. And, indeed, if the civil magistrates are entitled, in justice, to be supported by the people, even though they may have other means of providing for themselves, how much more justly are the Pastors of souls, who labour for the eternal welfare of their Flock, entitled to the like support from them, being deprived of any other means of procuring a livelihood, owing to their time being exclusively given up to the spiritual wants of their Parishioners. St. Paul makes use of this very argument, and says: "Who serveth as a soldier, at any time, at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Who

feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"—*I. Cor.*, ix. 7.

4. "And by a divine Precept also", the people are bound to contribute to the support of their Pastors. St. Paul, in the above passage, makes use of the argument drawn from the law of nature to enforce this duty. But he does not stop here; he goes on, in the same chapter, to show that it is an express command of God, and a law of Jesus Christ, that the Pastors of the Church should receive bodily support from their Flock: "Know ye not", says he, "that they who work in the holy place, eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar, partake with the altar? So also hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel"—*I. Cor.*, ix. 13. In this passage we find that the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Apostle, declares that this duty of contributing to the support of our Pastors is ordained by Jesus Christ.

5. In, fact, we find it expressly ordained by Him, when He sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the Jews; for we find Him addressing them in these words: "Go; behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes into whatsoever house you enter in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have; for the labourer is worthy of his hire"—*Luke*, x. 3, 5, 7. In these words the duty of "contributing to the support of our pastors" is enforced, and laid down as a duty that we "are obliged, in conscience and justice", to perform. Hence, St. Paul repeats the same obligation in various parts of his epistles. "Let him", he says, in his Epistle to the Galatians, "that is instructed in the Word, communicate to him that instructeth him in all good things"—*Gal.*, vi. 6.

Q. Has the Church enacted a special law which obliges Christians to support their Pastors?

A. Yes : the Church made a law requiring a certain portion, called tithes, to be contributed by the people for the decent support of their Pastors.

6. The duty of supporting the Pastors was so liberally and readily complied with in the early ages of the Church, that there was no need of any special law to enforce it ; and the necessities of the pastors of the Church were amply supplied by the voluntary offerings of the people. But in process of time, the charity of men growing cold, and a worldly spirit taking hold of them, they began to neglect this essential duty, and several abuses followed. On that account the Church interposed her authority, and, as "those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel", she made a law, requiring a fixed sum, called tithes, to be paid by the people for the support of their pastors. This law was confirmed by the civil powers of all Christian nations, in one form or other ; so that the duty of "contributing to the support of our pastors" is established by the natural, divine, civil, and ecclesiastical laws.

7. In all countries where the Catholic religion is established, the people are obliged by law to contribute to the support of their Pastors ; but where the Catholic religion is not the established religion, as in these countries, the means of supporting the Pastors is not enforced by law. In Ireland, England, Scotland, and America, and some other missionary countries, the Pastors study more the salvation of souls than their own convenience, and content themselves with the small pittance that Providence otherwise provides for them, and with such voluntary offerings as it pleases God to inspire their people to give them. With such they are content ; for the singular love and affection of their flocks for them,

amply compensate for all worldly comforts and conveniences.

Q. What are we forbidden to do by the sixth precept of the Church?

A. Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times, nor to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred, or otherwise prohibited by the Church, nor clandestinely.

8. "The sixth precept of the Church", as we have already seen, does not allow "marriages to be solemnized at the forbidden times". The times in which it is forbidden "to solemnize marriage", are from the first Sunday in Advent to the Epiphany, and from the first day of Lent, or Ash-Wednesday, to Low Sunday, both included. The reason why the Church forbids us "to solemnize marriage" at these times is, because the times of Advent and Lent are set apart for humiliation, penance, and prayer; and, therefore, it is quite contrary to, and inconsistent with, the spirit of those times to be employed in feasting, drinking, and dancing—things which generally accompany the *solemnizing* of marriage.

9. The sixth precept of the Church also forbids us "to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred, or otherwise prohibited by the Church". Nature itself has an abhorrence to marriage-connexions between those who are nearly related in blood; and Almighty God made several laws forbidding such near connexions among His chosen people. The Church therefore enforces this dictate of God and Nature, by the particular law she has made for this purpose; for, as the natural law only points out in general, that people should not marry who are nearly connected in blood, the Church determines the

particular degrees to which this prohibition is to be extended.

10. "The forbidden degrees of kindred" are from the first to the fourth degree, inclusive—counting in a direct line from the common stock in which the parties are united in the same father and mother. The father and mother are the common stock; their children—brothers and sisters—are in the first degree of kindred, because they are one degree removed from the common stock. The children of those brothers and sisters—cousins-german, or first cousins—are in the second degree of kindred, because they are two steps or degrees removed from the common stock. The children of cousins-german or first cousins, are in the third degree of kindred, because they are three degrees removed from the common stock; and the children of these last are in the fourth degree of kindred, as they are four steps or degrees removed from the common stock in which they are united in the same father and mother. When the parties are not equally distant from the common stock from which both of them proceed, they are related to each other in the degree of the one who is farthest removed. These four degrees are called the "forbidden degrees of kindred", because the Church prohibits marriage to be contracted within them.

11. The Church prohibits those also to marry who are connected by affinity arising from lawful marriages within the same fourth degree. By *affinity* from lawful marriages is meant the relationship that exists between a husband and the blood relations of his wife—the connexion which the husband contracts with the blood relations of his wife, and which the wife contracts with the blood relations of her husband. An unlawful cohabitation creates the same kind of affinity, and prevents marriage with the relatives of each other, but only within the second degree inclu-

sive. Godfathers and godmothers contract a spiritual relationship or affinity with the child for whom they are sponsors, and also with the parents of that child.

12. "Persons otherwise prohibited by the Church" are not allowed to be married. There are many persons, besides those within the "forbidden degrees of kindred", that the Church prohibits from being married; for there are many impediments besides those of consanguinity and affinity, which are obstacles to the marriage of parties—such as spiritual affinity, promises of marriage made to others, the parents of the parties not giving their consent to the marriage, the banns not being published nor dispensed in, and the parties attempting a clandestine marriage.

Q. Why is the prohibition of marriage extended to the fourth degree of kindred?

A. That marriage may not be restricted to relatives; and also that sinful familiarities before marriage may be prevented.

13. Persons closely connected by consanguinity or affinity, are prohibited from entering into marriage with each other, that different families may be more united in the bonds of human society and Christian charity, which will take place when people are prevented from marrying persons who are their blood relations. And another reason is, that as to persons who are nearly connected in kindred—being frequently in one another's company, and upon a family footing or the most intimate terms among themselves—there is greater danger that they might be guilty of improper intercourse and sinful acts, were they encouraged to it by the hopes of marriage; but all such hopes being cut off by the prohibition of marriage between such relatives, an efficacious bar is placed against such illicit acts.

Q. Does the Church, in any case, dispense with these strict prohibitions?

A. Yes; the Church does grant dispensations in the prohibited degrees of kindred, in regard to marriage.

14. All the laws of the Church are made for the edification, and not for the destruction or hurt of her children; therefore, where there are just and solid reasons, the Church dispenses with this prohibition, especially in the third and fourth degrees, but very seldom—and not without the strongest reasons—in the second degree.

Q. Is a clandestine marriage a valid and good marriage?

A. Where the decree of the Council of Trent (which condemns and annuls clandestine marriages) has been published and received (as in all Ireland), a clandestine marriage is no marriage; it is null and void in the sight of God and His Church.

15. “A clandestine marriage” is not a “valid and good marriage”, as it has been condemned and even made *null* by the Council of Trent. The Church in that Council, considering the great and many evils that flow from clandestine marriages, made a solemn Decree, by which it is ordained that every marriage in future should be made in the presence of the Pastor of either party, or in the presence of a Priest commissioned by him, and two or three witnesses being also present. And it also declared, that where this is not complied with, the marriage “is no marriage, it is null and void in the sight of God and His Church”. In consequence of this, wherever this decree “has been published and received (as in all Ireland)”, no marriage of Catholics can be con-

tracted but in presence of the proper Pastor, or one commissioned by him, or by the Bishop. In all other places where the Decree of the Council has not been published, it is sinful and unlawful to be married by any other than the proper Pastor or some Priest commissioned by him—though such a marriage may not be “null and void”—for it is altogether opposed to the spirit and desire of the Church, and to her repeated prohibition of clandestine marriages.

Q. What is a clandestine marriage?

A. Every marriage of Catholics is declared clandestine by the Church, as which the Parish Priest of the man or woman is not present, or another priest by his leave or leave of the Bishop, with two or three witnesses.—*Con. Trid. Ss. de Reform.*

16. A marriage is called “clandestine” when it is contracted in a clandestine manner or secretly—not attended with those conditions which are required for its publicity. “A clandestine marriage” is therefore that which is contracted without the presence of the Parish Priest of either party, and without at least two witnesses. In order therefore that the marriage of Catholics should be valid, there is required by the Council of Trent that the Parish Priest of either party should be present, or another Priest commissioned by the Parish Priest or by the Bishop, and also that there should be at least two witnesses present. A marriage of Catholics cannot be performed by a Priest not connected with the parish of either the man or the woman, except he be commissioned, as we have already said, by the Parish Priest of the parish of either party, or commissioned by the

Bishop. Again, even if the proper Parish Priest be present, and that there are no witnesses present, there is no marriage, for the Council of Trent requires, in addition to the presence of the Parish Priest, two witnesses at least—one witness will not suffice.

17. The *proper Pastor* required by the Council of Trent is, either the Bishop of the Diocese—for he is Pastor of every Parish in his Diocese—the Parish Priest of the Parish of either of the parties about to be married—for the pastor of either place may marry them, though the common custom is that it be performed by the pastor of the place to which the woman belongs—and the Coadjutor, as he is appointed by the Bishop for the discharge of all the parochial functions—*ad omnes causas*—except a special delegation by the Bishop or Parish Priest be deemed necessary for the Vicar or Coadjutor, with regard to his *assisting at marriage*.

Q. Do the Precepts of the Church oblige under pain of mortal sin?

A. Yes; “he that will not hear the Church”, says Christ, “let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican”—*Luke*, x. 16; *Mat.*, xviii. 17

18. You have been already told, dear children, that before Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, He said to His Apostles, and in their persons to all their successors: “All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth . . . as my Father sent Me, so I also send you”—*John*, xx. 21. The Church has then received the power of establishing, suppressing, instructing, interpreting, and of punishing and rewarding. In virtue of this authority, she has given commandments to the faithful—she has imposed upon them Precepts; and they are bound to

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obey them, just as they are bound to obey those which emanated directly from God Himself.

19. This power of commanding resides in the Pastors, whom He has appointed to rule and govern His Church, and to whom He has said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me"; and again He says: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican". This power, which the Church received from her Divine Founder, she has never ceased to exercise. From the earliest days of Christianity, the Apostles have issued their ordinances; and we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the early Christians received and obeyed them with cheerfulness. To refuse submission to those who govern in the name of God, would be to refuse submission to God Himself. We are, then, obliged to observe the precepts of the Church, as we observe the commandments of God; and whoever transgresses even one of these precepts, in a matter of importance and with perfect consent, renders himself guilty of "mortal sin"; for "the precepts of the Church oblige under pain of mortal sin".

Q. What is necessary to keep the Commandments of God and of His Church?

A. The grace of God, which is to be obtained by prayer and the Sacraments.

20. To keep the Commandments of God and His Church, "the grace of God" is necessary, and most necessary; for we cannot of ourselves, and without the grace of God, keep one single commandment, nor do the least thing towards our salvation, either in thought, word, or deed. We cannot even have so much as a good motion in our hearts towards God,

unless we are aided by His heavenly grace. We can neither think a good thought, nor speak a good word, which may in any way promote our salvation, without "the grace of God"; for "we are not sufficient", as the Apostle says, "to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God"—II. *Cor.*, iii. 5. This grace, so "necessary to keep the commandments of God and of His Church", is to be obtained by fervent "prayer"—praying fervently to God for His benediction. If we pray for "the grace of God", we shall undoubtedly obtain whatever we stand in need of; for God will turn a willing ear to our supplications and prayers. "The Sacraments", too, are a most efficacious means of obtaining grace; for by means of them sin is blotted out, and our souls strengthened and fortified against the assaults and temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE AMONG EARLY CHRISTIANS.

* The Christians of the early ages of the Church did not enter upon any matter of importance without having first consulted their bishop. They never made a promise of marriage without having informed their ecclesiastical superior of their intended design, and without having received his approbation. "It is meet", says St. Ignatius in his letter to Polycarp, "that the persons about to be married should enter into that holy state according to the directions given them by the bishop, that the marriage should be performed in the Lord, and not by mere inclination". St. Clement of Alexandria, speaking on the same subject, says, "that the parties about to be married should have their marriage blessed by the powerful word of the bishop, by prayers and sacrifices". Tertullian says, that he had not words to express the happiness and the dignity of a marriage perfected by the Church, confirmed by the Sacrifice, and impressed by the seal of bene-

diction,—of a marriage announced by the angels, and declared valid by the heavenly Father. According to St. Clement of Alexandria, the parties about to be married should be dressed in white, because white is the symbol of virginity, pure and intact. It is a custom among the Greeks, that when the parties about to be married were entering the church, they were met by a priest, who presented them with lighted torches, which, when they arrived at the altar, were laid on it.

OLD PRACTICES CONNECTED WITH MARRIAGE.

One of the oldest usages by which the spouses plighted their mutual vows in presence of the priest, was the joining of both right hands. Among the Jews and Romans, the giving and taking of the right hand was a pledge of fidelity. When Raguel married his daughter to the young Tobias, he placed her right hand in that of her betrothed. The placing of the nuptial ring on the finger, which took place immediately before the imposition of hands, is of recent origin. In the olden times, the bridegroom himself placed the ring on the third finger of the left hand of his future wife on the day of their espousals. Among the Romans, as Pliny remarks, the rings were of iron metal; probably because this metal was considered the symbol of a solid and lasting fidelity. However, St. Clement of Alexandria allows the giving of a gold ring, as may be seen by these words:—"The bridegroom should give the bride a gold ring; not for the purpose of ornament, but in order to purchase things that may be necessary for the house". So, according to St. Clement, the nuptial ring was not only a symbol of conjugal fidelity, but was, moreover, an emblem of the rights which the wife enjoyed, as mistress of the house. In the fifth century, another ceremony connected with marriage was introduced. Whilst the bridegroom and bride held their right hands joined, the priest tied them with a band of a purple colour, and over that placed another band of a red or black colour. This tie was an emblem of the indissolubility of the union of man and wife; and the red band was a figure of the fire of mutual love with which their hearts should be inflamed.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are we obliged in justice and conscience to support our pastors?

2. Why have our pastors a just right of being supported by the laity?
3. Does Nature itself ever dictate to us that we should support our pastors?
4. Is there a particular command given by our Lord to support our pastors?
5. What did Christ say when He sent His Apostles to preach the Gospel?
6. Are we specially commanded by the Church to support our pastors?
7. How are the pastors supported in England, Ireland, and Scotland?
8. Why are marriages not solemnized in Lent and Advent?
9. Why is it that near relatives cannot be married?
10. What do you mean by the forbidden degrees of kindred?
11. What do you mean by affinity?
12. Who else are prohibited by the Church from being married?
13. Why is it that persons closely related to each other cannot be married?
14. Does the Church for any reasons grant a dispensation in these prohibitions?
15. Are clandestine marriages valid marriages?
16. What is it that renders a marriage clandestine?
17. What do you understand by one's own Priest?
18. Has the Church received authority from Christ to command the faithful?
19. How do you prove that this power of commanding resides in pastors?
20. By what means can we keep the Commandments of God and His Church?

PRACTICE.

1. Consider the precept of contributing to the support of your pastors as a matter of importance, as it has been laid down by the Church.
2. Always comply exactly with the rules which the Church has made in reference to marriage.
3. Endeavour to remove from the minds of the ignorant the erroneous impression, that they can be married by any Priest.

PRAYER.

O God! grant that in all things we may be faithful to Thy commands, and comply strictly with the precepts of Thy

holy Church. She has received from Thee authority to govern and direct us in the way of salvation; and to her authority and rule we now commit ourselves, and resolve for evermore to be submissive to her teaching, and to follow her rules and guidance. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

ON PRAYER.

Q. What is prayer?

A. An elevation of the soul to God to adore Him, to bless His holy name, to praise His goodness, and to return Him thanks for His benefits.

1. Prayer, dear children, is "an elevation of the soul", or a raising up of our hearts to God, "to adore Him, to bless His holy name, to praise His goodness, and return Him thanks for His benefits". When we pray, our hearts and minds are raised up to God and hold converse with Him. In prayer we, in a manner, quit this earth, and soar up to Heaven; that is, our thoughts should be removed from the things of this earth, and fixed in God. Prayer is, therefore, a conversing with Him, a raising up of our hearts to Him; and that elevation or raising up of our souls to Him, should be done in order "to adore Him", that is, to pay Him homage, to confess Him to be our Sovereign Lord and the Giver of all good—to acknowledge Him as the Author of our lives, and that we are depending on Him for everything.*

2. "To bless His holy name", our hearts should also be elevated to Him. We should praise and bless Him—we should exalt and glorify Him, as endowed

with every perfection—we should refer all honour to Him, as being the source of everything that is excellent and good. “To praise His goodness, and return Him thanks for His benefits”, we, too, should raise our hearts to God. God’s goodness should never be forgotten by us; but we should always praise His goodness for the many favours He has bestowed on us, and for the many blessings we have received from Him. Our souls should be elevated to God, “to return Him thanks for His benefits”. He has conferred many benefits on us—we have been created, redeemed, and sanctified by Him—we are indebted to Him for everything that we hold in this world, and, therefore, we should often return Him thanks for them. When we have received a favour from a friend, we at once thank him, and say to him earnestly that we shall never forget his kindness; but, how much more should we return God thanks, for He is our Sovereign Benefactor.

Q. Is prayer anything else ?

A. It is an humble petition to God for all necessities for soul and body.

3. Together with being an elevation of the soul to God, to adore Him and bless His holy name, “prayer is an humble petition” to Him, and an earnest request for all that is necessary for us, with regard both to our “soul and body”. It is “an humble petition” for whatever is necessary for the interests of our souls. The principal object of our prayers to God should be our eternal salvation and all those means which are necessary for securing it. We should, therefore, pray in particular that God may preserve us from all sin, that He may give us grace to subdue our evil passions and to resist temptations, the grace of persevering in virtue, living holily, and dying happily.

The object of our prayers should be, that God may grant us patience and resignation to His holy will under all the difficulties and trials to which we may be subject in this life—that He may enable us to go through all the duties of our state of life, so as to honour Him and to sanctify our souls.

4. Prayer is also “an humble petition to God” for everything that is necessary for the good of our bodies. Everything, dear children, comes from God; the goods of this world as well as those of the world to come, proceed from His hands. We can, therefore, petition God for them—we can ask Him for health and strength, and food and raiment—we can ask Him to be delivered from injustice and wrong, from distress and want, from sickness and poverty, and from all the evils of this life. We can ask for all these temporal necessities, but we should ask them only as a secondary means of salvation, and in as much as they are conducive to it. The riches and the goods of this life, if they be used to promote our salvation, are real goods; and so we can ask God for them.

5. Christ Himself shows us by His own example, that we should pray for temporal blessings only conditionally, and that our prayers ought to be made with perfect resignation to the will of God:—“Father”, He says, “if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me; but yet not My will, but Thine be done”—*Luke*, xxii. 42. We should pray for temporal blessings, if they conduce to the interests of our souls, because “prayer” is the necessary means to obtain them. But as we cannot know whether it would be good for us to possess them or not, we should leave it entirely to God to grant them or not, as He thinks fit. In every case of this sort, we ought to be firmly persuaded, that if God do not think fit to grant the very thing we ask, He will

grant us something else that He sees better for us ; for prayer can never be without fruit, according to the promise made by Christ Himself : " Every one that asketh, receiveth"—*Mat.*, vii.

Q. Is prayer a necessary means of salvation ?

A. Yes ; all are obliged to pray ; for without prayer none can be saved.

6. Praying, and praying always, is, dear children, most necessary for us ; for of ourselves, without the help of God's grace, we cannot do the least thing towards our salvation—we should even rush into every sort of crime, if God did not assist us. Our hearts are naturally prone to evil—our passions are violent—we are continually exposed to temptations, and every moment in danger of yielding to them ; and if we be not assisted by God, we cannot remove these temptations, but shall be overcome by them, and shall fall into sin. This divine assistance is to be obtained only by prayer. " Prayer" is the universal efficacious means of obtaining from God all the help necessary for our salvation. It is the key which opens to us all the treasures of Heaven—it is the canal through which every grace flows to our soul. It is the first grace given to us, and the last taken away. The humble Publican strikes his breast and cries, " Lord, be merciful to me a sinner", and the Lord granted him mercy. And all those who wanted any help from Jesus Christ, as we read in the Gospel, had recourse to Him by prayer.

7. What still more fully shows the necessity of prayer, is, that the want of it cannot be supplied by any thing else. The want of actual Baptism may be supplied by martyrdom—the want of the sacrament of Penance by perfect contrition—fasting and penitential works by alms-deeds—alms-deeds themselves by patient suffering and resignation to God's will ;

but the want of prayer nothing can supply ; and, therefore, the Scripture expressly says : “ You have not, because you ask not”—*James*, iv. 2. To *ask* is appointed by Almighty God as the secure means of obtaining the graces we stand in need of ; and if we neglect to use the means, the graces annexed to those means will not be bestowed upon us ; for this plain reason, “ because you ask not”.

8. The great necessity of “ prayer”, and our obligation to practise it, are frequently inculcated in the Holy Scriptures. After having described the danger of being called out of this world without being prepared, the only means Jesus Christ proposes for averting so great a misery, is watching and prayer : “ Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times”—*Luke*, xxi. 36. In the Gospel of St. Mark, He tells us, that as we cannot know at what time we may be summoned out of this world, we should be earnest in prayer : “ Take ye heed, watch and pray, for you know not when the time is”—*Mark*, xiii. 33. The same duty of prayer Christ enforces, as the great means of overcoming the temptations to which we are daily subject : “ Watch ye and pray”, He says, “ that ye enter not into temptation”—*Mat.*, xxvi. 41. St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, again and again inculcate the same duty : “ Be constant in prayer”, says St. Paul, “ watching in it with thanksgiving”—*Col.*, iv. 2.

9. Frequently, throughout the Scriptures, the duty of “ prayer” is inculcated and urged, as we have seen, in the most express terms ; and this clearly proves to us the necessity of it, and our strict obligation to practise it. In several of the texts, prayer is commanded as being the great means appointed for obtaining some of the most important graces which we require ; it is inculcated as the means of securing a happy death, final perseverance, of obtaining

strength to resist temptation, pardon of sins, consolation in sadness, deliverance from our tribulation, and perseverance in grace even to death. As it is, then, the great means for obtaining and securing those great blessings, we should be ever earnest in "prayer", and never neglect that important and holy exercise.

10. The great duty of praying, and the obligation under which we lie of practising it, is confirmed by the example of Christ Himself and His Saints. When Christ dismissed the multitude, as we are told in St. Matthew: "He went up into the mountain alone to pray". When He had any business of importance on hands, He began it by prayer; for we are told in St. Luke that before He chose His twelve Apostles, "He went into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when it was day, He called to Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them, whom He also named Apostles"—*Luke*, vi. 12. In like manner, before He entered the garden of Gethsemani on the night of His passion, He passed three hours in prayer. Now, why all this, as Jesus Christ had no need of praying on His own account? He prayed, dear children, for our instruction and example; to show us the necessity of prayer, and how diligent we ought to be in the exercise of so important a duty.

11. His Apostles, and indeed all His holy servants, under the Old Law as well as under the New, were most assiduous in the practice of this duty of prayer. They prayed "always". They prayed in particular when they had any business of importance on hands—they prayed when they were in difficulties and in dangers—they prayed when they had passions to subdue and temptations to surmount. When Paul and Silas "were put in prison, and their feet made fast in stocks at midnight, praying, they praised God,

. . . . and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors were opened, and every one's bonds were loosed"—*Acts*, xvi. 26. David rose at midnight to pray to God, and seven times a-day, at stated hours, performed this duty. But it would be endless to mention all the instances of prayer on the part of the servants of God, which we find throughout the whole Scriptures, and in the lives of all the saints and servants of God. But why were those holy souls so assiduous and diligent in the performance of this duty of prayer? For no other reason, surely, but that, knowing their many miseries, and convinced of their inability to do anything towards their salvation without the assistance of God, they were fully persuaded of the necessity of recurring to Him always by "prayer", for that divine aid and help.†

Q. When should we pray?

A. Christ Himself says: "We ought always pray"—*Luke*, xviii.

12. We should always pray; for Christ tells us so. We are every moment in danger of losing the grace of God, and of falling into sin, for the devil is continually going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; and so, we should always arm ourselves with prayer, that his repeated assaults may be warded off, and that we may escape his snares. The saints always prayed, because they were fully sensible of their own infirmities, and the great need they had of always receiving help from God. They were fully convinced, that without prayer they could not advance one step in the service of God, nor observe the least of His commands.

Q. How can we always pray?

A. By offering to God all our thoughts, words,

and actions; by keeping ourselves in the state of grace, and by praying at certain times.

13. We have already seen that we are all obliged to pray, for no one has ever been, nor no one ever will be, saved except by means of prayer. But when should we pray? "always", Christ says. But how can we always pray? In this way—offering to God, from time to time, during the course of the day, our hearts and affections, "our thoughts" and our "words"; making known to Him our wants, laying before Him our miseries and wretchedness, and begging of Him by short ejaculatory prayers, to preserve us from falling into sin—to grant us a continuance of His grace and friendship—to order our lives so that we may love Him here and enjoy Him hereafter. In this way "we can always pray". We "can always pray", too, by enduring patiently, and with resignation to His holy will, all the trials, pains, and afflictions that God may be pleased to send us—bearing them in a spirit of penance, and offering them up in expiation of the sins by which during life we have offended Him. We shall "always pray" if we offer to God "all our actions"; if, in every thing we do, we have the intention of pleasing Him, of procuring His honour and glory, of saving our own souls—suffering with patience and resignation the fatigue and weariness of our daily toil. To labour in this way in God's holy presence, is to "pray always", and is a prayer that will bring down on us the graces of heaven.†

14. "By keeping ourselves in the state of grace", we can, too, pray always. Removing ourselves from all voluntary occasions of sin—preserving our souls from the stain of guilt—keeping our bodies undefiled, and avoiding everything that may grievously offend God—prepared to sacrifice everything that we hold

dear, sooner than be guilty of a mortal offence against Him—treasuring within our hearts sanctifying grace—this is praying. And “by keeping ourselves in the state of grace” in this manner, with “offering to God all our thoughts, words, and actions”, and “by praying at certain times” of the day, we shall pray well and efficiently, and shall always pray.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. PHILIP NERI'S LOVE OF PRAYER.

* St. Philip Neri devoted a great deal of his time to prayer; and every day, during the course of his studies, visited all, or at least some of the seven Patriarchal Churches in Rome, appointed to be visited by pilgrims, which are a great distance apart from each other, and some of them without the city. He often spent the whole night in prayer before the door of some private church, and especially over the relics of the martyrs in the cemetery of Calixtus. Often when overpowered by sleep, he took a little rest on the ground, in a porch of one of the seven Churches. Often in prayer he was so overwhelmed with spiritual joy and sweetness as not to be able to stand. Sometimes he was heard, as he lay prostrate on the ground, to cry out:—“Enough, O Lord, enough; withhold a little, at present, I beseech you, the torrent of your sweetness”. And at another time:—“Depart from me, O Lord, depart from me; I am yet a mortal man, and am not able to receive such an abundance of celestial joy. Behold I die, my dear Lord, unless you succour me”. He used often to say: “O God, seeing you are so infinitely amiable, why have you given us but one heart to love you, and this so little and narrow?” It is believed that if God had not, on such occasions, abated or withdrawn His consolations, he must have died through excess of joy, as he himself averred. Galloni mentions several extraordinary raptures with which the Saint was favoured in prayer, and testifies that his body was sometimes seen raised from the ground, during his devotions, some yards high, and his countenance appeared shining with a bright light.—*Life of St. Philip Neri.*

MARCUS AURELIUS AND THE PRAYER OF THE
THUNDERING LEGION.

† Aurelius had embarked in a war against the Sarmatians and other hardy tribes of Germany, who were determined to make a stand for independent liberty, and for that purpose had collected a formidable force. Eager in his pursuit of conquest, the emperor hastily advanced into the dry and mountainous parts of Bohemia, where he must have perished with his whole army for want of water, if he had not been saved by the prayers of the Christians. The emperor in a letter to the Roman Senate, gave a full account of the wonderful event.—“We were in the middle of Germany”, says he, “hemmed in by mountains on one side, and on the other closely pressed by a formidable enemy, in numbers far superior to us. We were, moreover, fainting with thirst for want of water, which we had not tasted for five days. It was not possible to advance or retreat with any prospect of safety; to remain inactive was to perish by thirst. In this extremity I put up my fervent supplications to the gods for relief. The gods were deaf. I knew there were many Christians in the army; I called them around me, and commanded them to address the Deity I was a stranger to in our behalf. We had hitherto been taught to look upon Christians as an impious sect: we have been deceived. Justice forces us to believe that they are in a special manner favoured by their God. For no sooner did they fall upon their knees and begin to pray, than a copious and refreshing rain showered down from heaven. But the rain which was so refreshing to us, drove furiously against our enemies, like a tempest of hail, accompanied with vivid flashes of lightning and dreadful claps of thunder. Wherefore, since the prayers of this people are so efficacious with the most powerful God they adore, let us grant to the Christians full liberty of professing themselves such, lest they employ their prayers against us. On account of their religion, therefore, let none of them be henceforth accused, punished, or molested. Such is my will”.

PRAYING OF THE PROPHET DAVID.

† David, although upon a throne and occupied with the affairs of his kingdom, was accustomed to pray to God seven times a day, as he tells us. He even rose in the night to pray. Inspired by the spirit of God, he composed the psalms, which are still used in the Church, and form part of the daily office of the clergy and religious.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you understand by the word "prayer"?
2. How can we bless God's holy name, and return Him thanks for His benefits?
3. What should be the principal object of our prayer to God?
4. Can we pray to God for the necessities of our bodies?
5. Should our prayers for temporal necessities be conditional?
6. Why is it that we should always pray?
7. Is continual prayer necessary for us?
8. Can the want of prayer be supplied by anything else?
9. Is the necessity of prayer often inculcated in Scripture?
10. How does the necessity of prayer follow from the texts of Scripture?
11. Has Christ, by His own example, pointed out to us the duty of prayer?
12. Were all the saints and servants of God assiduous in the duty of prayer?
13. In what way should we act, that we may always pray?
14. Can we always be said to pray by keeping ourselves in the state of grace?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever entertain the highest esteem for prayer, considering that it is an elevation of your soul to God, and not a mere movement of your lips.
2. Often recall to mind the necessity of praying, and often practise that holy exercise.
3. Demand of God every day the grace of praying well.

PRAYER.

We have now, O Lord, been taught what prayer means, and how necessary it is for us that we should frequently pray, and what these things are for which we should pray. Oh! how thankful we should be to Thee for this means of salvation. We now regret, dear Lord, our past neglect of this necessary and holy exercise. We now feel sorrow at having hitherto prayed with so little attention; but we promise Thee, that henceforward we shall pray often, and with attention and devotion, and that we shall so live, that our lives may be a continual prayer. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE TIME AND MANNER OF PRAYER.

Q. At what particular time should we pray?

A. On Sundays and Holidays, every morning and every night, and in all dangers, temptations, and afflictions.

1. The particular times at which we should pray are, in the first place, "Sundays and Holidays"; for these are the days appointed for us to attend to the service of God and the sanctification of our souls. On Sundays and Holidays, we cannot engage ourselves in servile works, but giving up all temporal concerns, we should apply ourselves to those of our salvation. On those days we should, therefore, attend Church, hear the word of God, think upon Heaven, call to mind our last end, and forgetting things present, employ our thoughts upon those which are eternal. On "Sundays and Holidays" we should fervently pray to God for all the graces we require, we should implore of Him to preserve us from mortal sin, to assist us "in all dangers", and strengthen us against the "temptations" of our enemy. In idleness and amusements these days should not be spent, for they have not been appointed for riot and dissipation, but have been instituted, that we may pay attention to the concerns of our souls, and so we should pray on those days in particular.

2. "Every morning and every night" are also particular times at which we should pray. "Every morning" we should offer ourselves to God by prayer and should deem it an indispensable duty to do so. All our actions, but chiefly the first in the morning,

should be offered to God. The first action is that which is most agreeable to Him. It is by that first action we consecrate the rest to Him; by it we draw down the Divine blessings upon all our works, and collect the graces of God during the whole day, as the Israelites in the desert collected in the morning the manna of Heaven, which supported them all day. St. John Climacus tells us, that the devil is ever present at the time that Christians awake from sleep, that he may snatch away from God the first affection of their hearts.

3. To render the efforts of your enemy unavailing, consecrate yourselves to God immediately after awaking, and as soon as you are dressed, place yourselves on your knees, and with great humility and fervour, and most profound respect, adore God from your heart, acknowledge him for your Sovereign Lord and Creator, and looking up to him as one from whom you receive all that you have and are. Give Him thanks for all the benefits you have received from Him—for the benefit of your creation, of your redemption, and of your being a Christian and a child of the Catholic Church.

4. Beg of Him the grace to employ the day in His love and service; resolve not to consent to any mortal sin. In the last place, offer to God all the actions of the day, praying to Him that He would bless you and direct you in all your works, and then recommend yourselves to the Blessed Virgin, to your guardian Angel, and to your patron Saint. Perform these short exercises, but with much fervour, and if so, be assured that you will find the truth of that saying of the Wise Man: "They that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me"—*Proverbs*, viii. 17.

5. "Every night" is another particular time that we should pray. If it be a business of importance to begin the day well, it is of no less importance to finish

it in the same manner. In the Old Law, God commanded not only a Sacrifice for every morning, but also for every evening, to teach us, that as we ought to adore Him in the beginning of the day, so we should at the end of it, thank Him for the graces and blessings which He has bestowed upon us and our works, and ask pardon for any offences which we might have committed during the day. And if, dear children, among these sins there should be any that were mortal, arise not from your prayers till you have deplored your misery and entreated pardon of God, with all the sorrow of your heart, and resolved to confess them as soon as possible. Beg of Him that you may not die in that wretched state; then when you lie down, recommend to God your soul and body, beseeching Him to preserve you from all misfortunes that night, and principally from sin. Offer your prayers to the Blessed Virgin, your Angel guardian, your Patron, and all the Saints; and as at the beginning of the day you begged of God the grace to live well, so at the end do not forget asking of Him the grace to die well. End every day as you would one day wish to end your life.

6. "And in all dangers, temptations, and afflictions", we should also pray. Prayer is the great means of escaping "dangers", of repelling "temptations", and of supporting with patience "afflictions". When we are in danger of falling into sin, let us immediately have recourse to God by prayer, and God will preserve us from that dire misfortune. If the devil tempts us to offend our Creator, let us pray, and pray with all the fervour of which we are capable, and we shall overcome the assaults of our enemy. *Pray*, our Lord says, *that you may not enter into temptation*; for *without this*, that is *My grace, you can do nothing*. Therefore, when "temptations" assail you, cast yourself before God,

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and cry out to Him, *O Lord, hasten to my assistance! Ah, Save me, lest I perish! O Jesus, my Saviour, have pity on me!*

7. "In afflictions" we should be unceasing in prayer; it is our only resource of comfort under painful circumstances. If God be pleased to visit you with poverty and sickness, with crosses and afflictions, bow down with resignation to His holy will. Offer up to Him these crosses and afflictions. Pray to Him that He may grant you the grace of patiently enduring them. Instead of arraigning Providence; instead of flying in the face of God, and exclaiming against Heaven; instead of being dejected and giving way to melancholy and sadness; instead of complaining that you are severely dealt with; instead of breaking into murmurs and blasphemies, which cannot assuage your pains, redress your grievances, or restrain God's vengeance, but rather redouble your misfortunes, you should look up to Heaven in the midst of your "afflictions", and call on Jesus Christ for help to bear them in a spirit of patience and resignation. Prayer under your crosses will be to you a never-failing source of consolation, and will change your moans of sorrow into tears of joy and gladness.*

Q. After what manner should we pray?

A. With all possible attention and devotion, and in a respectful posture on bended knees.

8. In order that our prayers may be acceptable to God, we must pray "with all possible attention and devotion". Without "attention and devotion", all lip-prayer is but the shadow of prayer—it is but mocking God. But what is meant by "attention" in prayer? St. Thomas distinguishes three kinds of attention: one to the words, that is, when we take

care neither to suppress the words nor to clip or mumble them, but to articulate every sentence entire; the second attention is to the sense or meaning of the words we utter; the third attention is to God, to whom we speak, and to the subject on which we intend to address Him. The second kind of attention not being in the power of those who do not understand the words which they pronounce, the first and third may be sufficient. When we pray, we should always bear in mind that we are addressing ourselves to God, and so attend to what we are saying to Him, praying with the heart at the same time that we are praying with the lips. As prayer is an elevation of our souls to God, the mere repetition of the words, without the heart taking any part in them, is not praying to God, but rather mocking God, and rendering ourselves liable to the reproach which Jesus Christ made to the Jews: *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

9. And how can we expect that God should hear our prayer, when we do not attend to it ourselves? It cannot be denied that distractions at prayer will frequently occur; and the greatest Saints were not exempt from distractions during prayer, and on that account often deplored their weakness and inconstancy of mind. Something must be allowed to human weakness; the mind of man in its present state being surrounded with corporal objects, cannot easily raise itself to those which are spiritual; it cannot, therefore, be required of us, that while at prayer our attention should be perpetually fixed on it. When you begin to pray, bring to mind the presence of God, to whom you are speaking, and when, during prayer, you perceive your thoughts wandering, recall them at once, placing yourself anew in God's presence. If you act thus, dear children, you need not be uneasy on account of the distractions which trouble you;

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they are involuntary, and neither offend God nor lessen the merit of your prayer.

10. "All possible devotion" should accompany our prayer; for devotion is a condition of prayer not less necessary than attention. Every one esteems devotion, though few know what it really is. True devotion is a disposition of the heart, which makes us perform with affection and fervour all actions that belong to the service of God. It is related of the people of Israel that they "offered first fruits to the Lord with a devout mind"—*Exodus*, xxxv. 21; and when God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, we are told that "all, both men and women, with devout minds, offered gifts"—*Exodus*, xxxv. 29. If these rich offerings could not please God without the fervent devotion of the heart, what is there in prayer that could please Him without similar devotion? What is there in prayer that could be so acceptable to God as to merit the favours of Heaven, unless the heart were given to Him by the ardour of devotion. The devotion here recommended does not consist in that sanctified composure of the exterior which lifts up the eyes, wrings the hands, bends the knees, or throws the body prostrate on the ground. Devotion is chiefly in the heart, and comprises three pious acts—a respect for the majesty of God, an humble avowal of our spiritual wants, and earnest desire to be assisted by the goodness of God.†

11. "In a respectful posture on bended knees", is the most becoming manner in which we should pray. "On bended knees" we are in position becoming humble supplicants; it is a posture that shows we feel our own unworthiness, and are conscious of the majesty of the God to whom we pray. We should, then, dear children, when at prayer, avoid all unbecoming lolling, gazing, and prattling; we should prostrate ourselves, like the Publican mentioned in the Gospel,

in the most submissive posture, with a reverential awe, and with an inward humility of soul, at the feet of our offended Lord. An humble posture and a modest comportment show that the heart is full of the action which it performs.†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PRAYER OF MARY OF EGYPT.

“ St. Mary of Egypt tells us, that when arrived in Jerusalem, she mixed with the crowd to get into the church on the festival on which the Holy Cross was shown and exposed to the veneration of the faithful, but found herself withheld from entering the place by some secret but invisible force. “This happening to me”, says the saint, “ three or four times, I retired into a corner of the court and began to consider with myself what this might proceed from ; and seriously reflecting that my criminal life might be the cause, I melted into tears. Beating, therefore, my sinful breast, with sighs and groans, I perceived above me a picture of the Mother of God. Fixing my eyes upon it, I addressed myself to that holy virgin, begging of her, by her incomparable purity, to succour me, defiled with such a load of abominations, and to render my repentance acceptable to God. I besought her that I might be suffered to enter the church doors, to behold the sacred wood of my redemption ; promising from that moment to consecrate myself to God by a life of penance, taking her for my surety in this change of my heart. After this ardent prayer, I perceived in my soul a secret consolation under my grief ; and attempting again to enter the church, I went up with ease to the very middle of it, and had the comfort to venerate the precious wood of the glorious Cross which brings life to man. Considering, therefore, the incomprehensible mercy of God, and His readiness to receive sinners to repentance, I cast myself on the ground, and after having kissed the pavement with tears, I arose and went to the picture of the Mother of God, whom I had made the witness and surety of my engagements and resolutions. Falling there on my knees before her image, I addressed my prayers to her, begging her intercession, and that she would be my guide.

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After my prayer I seemed to hear this voice : ‘ If thou goest beyond the Jordan, thou shalt there find rest and comfort’. Then weeping and looking on the image, I begged of the holy Queen of the World that she would never abandon me”.—*Life of St. Mary of Egypt.*

ST. TERESA AND HER LOVE OF PRAYER.

† St. Teresa when young sought to be much alone, and said very long prayers, with great devotion, especially the Rosary ; for her mother inspired her tender soul with a singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin. She had in her room a picture of our Saviour discoursing with the Samaritan woman at the well, with which she was much delighted, and she often addressed those words to our Saviour with great earnestness : “ Lord, give me of that water”, meaning that of His grace and love. In the twelfth year of her age, upon the death of her mother, in great grief, she threw herself upon her knees before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and besought her with many tears that she would vouchsafe to be her mother. The saint adds that this action, which she did with great simplicity, she thought afterwards very profitable to her ; and found the Blessed Virgin favourable in all her requests, and looked upon herself as much indebted to her intercession for the great mercy by which God was pleased to bring her back to a sense of her duty, after she had begun to go astray : “ Prayer”, she says, “ is the great gate through which the graces of the Lord pass. If this gate be closed, what will become of us ? Alas”, she adds, “ I have sad experience of it. I had the misfortune to give up the practice of prayer, and I became every day more negligent and less devout. If I had not returned to this holy exercise I should have been lost”.—*Life of St. Teresa.*

THE EFFICACY OF HUMBLE PRAYER.

† We read in the Gospel of St. Luke, that two men went into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee standing bolt upright, gave thanks aloud to God, because, unlike to the rest of men, he was neither an extortioner, nor a thief, nor an adulterer, nor such as even the Publican behind him ; but that he fasted twice a week, and paid the tithes of all he possessed. With sentiments very different from these, the Publican stood far below. Conscious of his unworthiness, and humbled in mind and

body, he durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. He knocked his breast, and only spoke these words : " O God, be merciful to me a sinner". The pompous show of piety in the Pharisee may have attracted the eyes of men, but it provoked the displeasure of Almighty God. The Publican to vulgar eyes may have seemed an object of contempt; but his humility rendered him acceptable to Jesus Christ, for He said : " This man went down into his house, justified rather than the other". A prayer dictated by pride, became a sin in the Pharisee ; prayer coming from an humble heart, justified the Publican.—*St. Luke.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In what manner should we spend Sundays and Holidays
2. Should the first actions of the day be offered to God?
3. In what manner should we pray in the morning?
4. How should we conclude our morning prayer?
5. Why should we pray every night?
6. Should we pray at the time of danger and temptation?
7. In the time of affliction are we called on in particular to pray?
8. What do you mean by attention at prayer?
9. Can we altogether avoid distractions in prayer?
10. What do you understand by devotion at prayer?
11. In what posture should we be during prayer?

PRACTICE.

1. Let your prayers be frequent on Sundays and Holidays, for those days are set apart for prayer.
2. Every morning pray to God, that during the day He may preserve you from sin; and every night thank Him for the favours of the day.
3. When at prayer, maintain a respectful posture, remembering that you are conversing with God.

PRAYER.

O divine Jesus! grant us the gift of prayer. Seeing the many dangers to which we are daily exposed, we know well how necessary it is for us to demand often grace and strength

to enable us to overcome our enemies, and to preserve our virtue. We now resolve that henceforward we shall pray to Thee in a respectful posture, that our petitions may be heard and granted. On our knees we shall daily supplicate Thy grace and mercy, and beg of Thee a continuance of Thy love and friendship. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

Q. What conditions are necessary to render our prayers acceptable?

A. We must always offer them with an humble and contrite heart, with fervour and perseverance, with confidence in God's goodness, with resignation to His will, and in the name of Jesus Christ.

1. The first condition necessary to render our prayers acceptable is, that "we must always offer them with an humble and contrite heart". This is a most essential quality of prayer; for if our prayer be not offered with "an humble and contrite heart", God will not grant us those things for which we pray; for, as St. James tells us: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble"—*James*, iv. 6. And the royal Prophet David tells us, that God "hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition"; and that "He is nigh to them that are of a contrite heart"—*Psalms*, xxxiii. 19. "The Almighty", says St. Liguori, "does not hear the supplications of the proud, who trust in their own strength, but leaves them to their own weakness and misery, which, when they are abandoned by divine grace, will infallibly lead them to perdition".

2. This humility in prayer is founded upon two great truths, which should always be impressed on our minds. The first is, that of ourselves we can do no good towards our salvation, neither resist temptations, nor break evil habits. nor avoid sin, nor acquire any virtue, nor persevere in good, nor, in a word, do anything acceptable in the sight of God. The second truth is, that of ourselves we deserve no help, no grace, nor any good from Him, but rather, on account of our infidelity and ingratitude to Him, we deserve nothing but stripes and punishments. If we therefore wish to "render our prayers acceptable" to God and available to ourselves, we must endeavour to imitate the humble Publican, by saying sincerely from our hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner", and avoid the principle of the proud Pharisee, who confided in his own justice, depended on his own merits, and, in a spirit of presumption, imagined that he was worthy that his prayers should be heard. But they were not heard, for Jesus Christ tells us, that the humble publican "went down into his house justified rather than the other"—*St. Luke*, xviii. 14.

3. All the holy servants of God were firmly convinced of the necessity of praying "with an humble and contrite heart", and, therefore, in all their prayers which are recorded in Scripture, especially in times of distress, we find that they were all grounded in this holy virtue of humility. Thus, Judith prayed: "Thy power, O God! is not in a multitude . . . nor from the beginning have the proud been acceptable to Thee; but the prayer of the humble and meek hath always pleased Thee"—*Judith*, ix. 16. In this manner the Royal Prophet prayed, when he cried out: "Have mercy on me, O God! according to Thy great mercy For behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me"—*Ps.*, l. 3. 7. Thus prayed Abraham, when he said to

God: "I shall speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes"—*Gen.*, xviii. 27. It was thus that St. Peter prayed, when he said to Jesus Christ: "Depart from me, O Lord! for I am a sinful man"—*Luke*, v. 8.*

4. It was thus the Prodigal son prayed when, filled with bitter grief for his many excesses, he said to his father: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son"—*Luke*, xv. 21. Such was the prayer of the humble publican who, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner"—*Luke*, xviii. 13. Pray, dear children, in this manner, with "contrite and humble hearts", and your prayers will be heard. It is humility which renders our prayers acceptable. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself", says the Wise Man, "shall pierce the clouds . . . and will not depart till the Most High behold"—*Ecclus.*, xxxv. 21.

Q. What is the second condition of prayer?

A. Fervour and perseverance.

5. The second condition necessary to render our prayers acceptable is, that they should be offered up "with fervour and perseverance". We should pray "with fervour", that is, with all possible ardour and earnestness, with the mind deeply penetrated with the sentiments contained in the prayers which we are saying. Let your prayers to God be not cold or indifferent—let them not be prayers coming from a tepid heart, from a heart with no love, or at least very little love, for God. When you pray, let your heart be filled with an ardent love for God, and an earnest desire for your salvation. Happy are those who during prayer feel this holy love and ardent desire. All their sighs and supplications are like so

many inflamed darts directed to the heart of God, who will send them His Angel to hear and instruct them, as He sent an Angel to the Prophet Daniel.†

6. "With perseverance" we should pray. "Perseverance" is another most necessary condition of prayer, so much so, that all the other conditions of prayer without it would be of no avail. If perseverance gives an additional value to all good actions, this is far more particularly true of prayer, as prayer is a duty of paramount importance. On this account our Lord, in exhorting us to pray, makes use of the terms, "seeking" and "knocking"; because when a person "seeks" what he has lost, or *knocks at a door* which remains shut, he commonly persists for a time.

7. And indeed there is nothing which our blessed Saviour seems more earnest to inculcate on us than to persevere in our prayers to God. The parable of the two friends, related in St. Luke, is expressly intended for that purpose, and our Lord concludes in these words: "Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many loaves as he needeth"; and then He immediately adds: "And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given you: Seek and you shall find: Knock and it shall be opened to you"—*Luke, xi. 9.* In this parable He wishes to make known to us, that this sacred promise of granting what we ask, is principally made to our "perseverance" in asking. And if perseverance could even move the heart of a friend, and that against his will, to do what was displeasing to him, and grant what was asked of him, how much more must it move the heart of God, who is all goodness, who takes delight to bestow His good things upon us, and who delays granting them only that He may grant them afterwards to our advantage, and as a reward of our "perseverance".

8. The example of the Cananean woman is presented to us by our Lord, to show us that we should persevere in prayer, and never grow weary of it. Her mode of proceeding is recorded at large, for our encouragement and imitation; and the holy Fathers have always looked on the suppliant appeal of the Cananean woman as the most perfect model of prayer. When she first presented her petition to our blessed Saviour, He seemed not to mind her: "And behold, a woman of Canaan, who came out of those coasts crying out, said to Him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word". She persisted, and the disciples begged Him to send her away, as being troublesome. But He seemed to despise her, as having nothing to do with her, saying: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel".

9. She, far from being discouraged by this apparent contempt, persisted with greater fervour, "for she came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me". He still seemed unmoved, and said: "It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs". This even did not repulse her, humiliating as the expression was; but she persisted the more, humbled herself the more, and from what He said, drew an argument in her own favour. True, said she, it is so. I acknowledge myself a wretched creature, and unworthy of being treated as a child, but let me have at least what even the dogs get; "for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table". Oh, then, indeed, our Saviour's tender heart could resist no longer. The justice of her petition—which was the cure of her daughter, who was grievously troubled by a devil—her fervour, her humility, her confidence, her perseverance, made such a powerful assault upon Him, that turning unto

her, He said : " O woman, great is thy faith ; be it done to thee as thou wilt ; and her daughter was cured from that hour"—*Matt.*, xv. 22. How strong an encouragement does all this give us, never to faint—never to be weary—never to give over knocking at the door of the Divine mercy ! How does it teach us rather to increase our fervour, our humility, and our confidence in Him, when He seems not to hear us ; and to be convinced that if we persevere in fervour and confidence, we will at last be heard.

Q. What are the other conditions of prayer, according to the Catechism ?

A. The other conditions of prayer are : confidence in God's goodness, with resignation to His holy will.

10. Another condition of prayer is, that we offer them " with confidence in God's goodness". To pray with confidence, is to pray with a strong conviction that God will hear us. O children ! if our prayers were always accompanied with this sacred hope, there is nothing that we should not obtain from God. When the Son of God was in this world, it was on account of the faith or " confidence" of those who prayed to Him that He worked miracles in their favour, and granted them what they sought. Our confidence cannot be too firm, since it rests on the power of God, which is infinite ; on His mercy, which has no bounds ; and on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, and by whose merits we hope to be saved. We address ourselves with confidence in our temporal wants to a powerful and tried friend ; and yet we fail to address ourselves to God in even our spiritual wants, although He commands and invites us to have recourse to Him as a good Father.†

11. " Resignation to God's will" is a most necessary condition of prayer ; so much so, that all the

other conditions of prayer, without it, would be of no avail. If at first you do not obtain from God what you ask, ask it again and again, without being discouraged. Though Almighty God has bound Himself by promise to grant us those good things which we ask of Him in prayer, and which are conducive to our salvation; yet He is not bound to give them to us the very moment we ask them, nor according to the manner and measure in which we ask them, for to do so, may not be to the interest of our souls. God is pleased, indeed, sometimes to hear our prayers immediately; at other times He requires to be prayed to for days and weeks and months and years. Sometimes He is pleased to grant us at once the whole of what we ask. At other times He grants it by little and little, and, as it were, insensibly. Now as to all these circumstances, we must be perfectly resigned to what God pleases. It is enough for us to know that all is intended by His infinite wisdom for our greater good, which He alone knows how to promote.

12. In prayer we must have principally at heart "the kingdom of God and His justice", and be more concerned about the eternal welfare of our souls, than the temporal goods of this passing and uncertain life. The temporal blessings of this world should not be the chief subject of our prayer; for in asking for worldly goods, we often know not what we ask, and it is a great mercy of God not to grant us those things, which if He were to grant them, might be the occasion of the ruin of our souls. We should not, then, be dejected or sad, because God has not granted us what we have prayed for. God has not attended to our request, because He knows that those things we pray for would not be conducive to the interests of our souls. When we pray to be delivered from crosses and sufferings, we must ever pray with "resignation

to His will. If it be expedient for us that we should be exempt from sufferings and crosses, God will remove them; if it be not, let us bear them with patience. Not my will, but Thy will be done.

13. To obtain our requests, we must take care to present them in the "name of Jesus Christ", and through the merits of His death and passion. "There is no other name under heaven given to man whereby we must be saved"—*Acts*, iv. 12. The Son of God has died for us; He has made over to us the merits of His death and passion; He has purchased for us those graces which we pray for; His blood continually pleads in our behalf. Through Him, then, "let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid"—*Heb.*, iv. 16.

Q. What do you think of those who, at their prayers, think not of God, nor of what they say?

A. If their distractions be wilful, their prayers, instead of pleasing God, offend Him, and are an abomination to Him.—*Matt.*, xv. 8.

14. Distractions in prayers are wilful or not wilful. "Wilful" distractions are all those worldly thoughts with which our minds are engaged during prayer, and that through our own free will and consent. Involuntary, or not wilful, distractions are those worldly thoughts which rush in on our minds during prayer, but against our will, and are either suggested by the enemy or arise from the infirmity of our nature. Involuntary distractions are not sinful, if we endeavour, as best we can, to remove them, and keep our mind attentive to the presence of God, to whom we are speaking; they will be of no hurt to our souls, nor will they hinder our prayers being heard by a good God.

15. But the case is very different with voluntary or "wilful distractions". If those "who, at their prayers, think not of God nor of what they say", and that their distractions be "wilful", such pretended prayer is, in fact, no prayer at all, it is mere hypocrisy, for it wants the foundation of prayer, which is the desire of the heart; it is a pretence of manifesting to God the desires of the heart by the words we repeat, whilst the heart has no desire at all of what the words express, but is engaged in affections very different from, and sometimes even contrary to, those which the words contain. To such a prayer is justly applied the reproach made by Isaias the Prophet, and which our blessed Saviour applies to the Jews: "Ye hypocrites, well has Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me"—*Matt.*, xv. 7. Such prayers, attended with "wilful" distractions, "instead of pleasing God, offend Him, and are an abomination to Him". We, therefore, should see, that if we wish our prayers should be acceptable to God, and profitable to ourselves, we must take care they flow from a fervent heart, burning with an earnest desire of obtaining from Him those inestimable favours which we pray for, and which will conduct us to eternal bliss.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE CHILD OF PRAYER.

* A virtuous and interesting little boy was accustomed to offer his heart to God every morning with great fervour, being mindful of our Lord's loving command, "Son, give me thy heart". This offering was, as it were, the soul of all his actions. "Whenever I fail in this duty", he used to say, "I feel dissipated during the day". He led a very holy life, and

died at the age of twelve years, in sentiments of extraordinary piety. "My God", he often said, as he lay on his death-bed ready to expire: "My God, I have almost every day offered Thee the sacrifice of my heart; I now freely offer Thee that of my life". If we imitate this pious boy, and be faithful in offering our hearts to God every morning, we shall, like him, die in sentiments of true piety.—*Arvisinet.*

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENNA'S FERVOUR IN PRAYER.

† St. Catherine of Sienna, when only twelve years old, was about being engaged by her parents in the married state. She wished to live a single life, but her parents were deaf to her entreaties. Considering her inclination to solitude as unsuitable to the life for which they designed her, her parents endeavoured to divert her from it, and began to thwart her devotions, depriving her, with this view, of the little chamber or cell they had till then allowed her. Catherine redoubled her prayers, watchings, and austerities, knowing her protection must be from God alone. Her prayers softened the heart of her father, who, edified at her patience and virtue, at length approved and seconded her devotion and all her pious desires. Her prayers produced most wonderful effects. Nannes, a powerful and turbulent citizen of Sienna, being brought to the saint to be reclaimed, all she could say to him to bring him to a right sense of his duty was of no effect, upon which she made a sudden pause in her discourse to offer up her prayers for him. They were heard that very instant, and an entire change was wrought in the man, to which his tears and other tokens bore evidence.—*Life of St. Catherine.*

THE PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS, MARTYR, IN A STORM.

† St. Ignatius, one day crossing the sea, was overtaken by a terrific storm. The mast of the vessel was soon split asunder, and all on board, except Ignatius, sent forth piercing screams, expecting every moment to be buried in the wild waves. The saint alone stood calm and undaunted. His courage never failed him during the storm; for the words of Scripture were ever present to his mind: "The winds and sea obey Him". "The Lord is my master", cried out St. Ignatius: "I place my whole confidence in Him—I surrender myself to His care". And this prayer, accompanied with confidence in God, saved his life, as well as the lives of his companions.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is humility a necessary condition of prayer?
2. Why is it that humility should be a necessary condition of prayer?
3. Cite some examples of humble prayer, from the prayers of God's servants.
4. In what manner did the Prodigal son and the humble Publican pray?
5. What do you mean by fervour in prayer?
6. Is perseverance a necessary condition of prayer?
7. Can you prove from the words of our Lord we should persevere in prayer?
8. Relate the manner in which the woman of Canaan prayed.
9. Did her perseverance induce our Lord to grant her prayer?
10. Should our prayer be accompanied with confidence in God?
11. Is resignation to God's will a necessary condition of prayer?
12. What are the reasons that should induce us to be resigned to God's will?
13. Should our prayers be presented in the name of Jesus Christ?
14. What do you mean by wilful and involuntary distractions?
15. What do you say of those who are willingly distracted at prayer?

PRACTICE.

1. When at prayer, let your words be sent up to Heaven with love and fervour.
2. Have confidence that your prayer will not be rejected, but shall be heard by God.
3. When you find your thoughts wandering during prayer, recall to mind the presence of God.

PRAYER.

O Jesus! we have now been instructed in the manner in which we should pray. Too often, we acknowledge that we have prayed without thinking scarcely of Thee, and that our prayers have been a mockery and insult. We now regret the past, and shall for the future endeavour to offer up our prayers with fervour and love, with confidence in Thy goodness, and with resignation to Thy holy will. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

ON PRAYER, AND OUR CHIEF DUTIES TO GOD.

Q. What prayers are most recommended to us?

A. The Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, and the Confiteor, or General Confession.

1. Of all vocal prayers, the Lord's prayer is the most perfect and the most excellent; it is the model and pattern of all other prayers. Every other prayer is but a paraphrase upon it; for it contains the substance of all things that we may and ought to demand from God, and it is an abridgment of all that we are to hope for, as the Creed is an abridgment of all that we are to believe. Tertullian calls it an abridgment of the Gospel. St. Augustin calls it the daily prayer of every Christian, and recommends it as a remedy against the sins of every day. In fine, the universal Church holds it in such high esteem, that it has inserted it in the most holy sacrifice of the Mass, that all the faithful should join together with the priest in offering it up to God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was the Author of it.

2. "The Hail Mary" is the most celebrated prayer that the Church addresses to the Blessed Virgin. It is called the *Ave Maria* or "Hail Mary", from the first words, with which it begins. It is likewise called the "Angelical Salutation", because the beginning of it is composed of the words that the Angel Gabriel said to the most holy Virgin, when he brought her the happy tidings concerning the incarnation of the Son of God.

3. "The Apostles' Creed" is called the *symbol of*

faith, because it is a mark that distinguishes the faithful from unbelievers, and contains a summary or short profession of the Christian religion. It was made by the twelve Apostles, and inspired by the Holy Ghost. It has been handed down ever since the time of the Apostles, by word of mouth, and given as a rule of Faith, which all are bound to believe and know according to their capacity, at least as to substance.* “The Confiteor, or General Confession”, is a confession of all the sins we have committed in thought, word, and deed, to God, the Blessed Virgin, St. Michael the Archangel, St. John the Baptist, and all the saints. It is generally repeated after the Apostles’ Creed, and it is a form of prayer which the faithful recite immediately before the confession of their sins in the tribunal of Penance.

Q. Does the Church also recommend the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity?

A. Yes, most certainly : they are an excellent form of prayer, and remind us of our chief duties to God.

4. “The Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity”, are “an excellent form of prayer”, for they “remind us of our chief duties to God”. For this reason the Church urges us to repeat these acts frequently. If time should permit, they should be recited every morning and evening, as in reciting them we make a profession of our belief in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the essential articles of our faith—we express a hope of obtaining, through God’s infinite power, goodness, and mercy, eternal salvation and everything contributing to it—we declare our love of God above all things, without exception,

* See vol. i. chap. viii.

on account of His infinite perfections, because He is the most beautiful, the most excellent of all beings ; because He is all-powerful, and nothing can resist His omnipotence ; because He is faithful in all His words, just in all His ways, holy in all His works ; because, in fine, whatever is beautiful, amiable, and lovely in all creatures, is but a faint image of the beauty, glory, and loveliness of God. In reciting the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, we, therefore, are reminded “of our chief duties to God”.

Q. What are our chief duties to God ?

A. To believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him.

5. Our first chief duty to God is to “believe in Him”; for without faith or belief in Him and His words, we cannot be saved. St. Paul tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please God”. This virtue of faith honours God, and renders Him homage as the sovereign and infallible truth. St. John tells us that “he that believes in Him is not condemned”. We, therefore, truly worship and honour God, and perform “our chief duties to Him”, when we firmly believe what He says, when we own and profess our faith in Him, even at the cost of our goods, liberty, and life. And God will reward us for this “our chief duty to Him”; for our Saviour tells us that if we own Him before men, He will own us before His Father, who is in Heaven. O blessed return and glorious reward of Faith !*

6. “To hope in Him” is the second of “our chief duties to God”. Hope is a supernatural and divine virtue, by which we expect with a firm confidence, from the goodness of God, the gifts which He has promised us. By Hope we expect with a full assurance—without any fear of being disappointed in our

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expectations—eternal life, a heavenly kingdom, an incorruptible crown, the possession of God for ever. We, of ourselves, are incapable of meriting such happiness; but God, who loves us, notwithstanding our miseries and unworthiness, has promised us all the graces necessary to obtain it. He has given us His only Son, that “whoever believes in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting”.

7. “To hope in Him” is the essential duty of a Christian, and a principal part of the homage and adoration which we owe God. We are repeatedly commanded in holy Scripture to hope in God. “Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart, and do not lean upon thy own prudence”, says the Wise Man in the Book of Proverbs. And as an inducement to hope in Him, God promises us a reward: “He that putteth his trust in Me shall inherit the land, and shall possess My holy mount”, says the Prophet Isaias. And after such assurances, should we not do God an injury by not hoping in Him? As God desires to be believed when He speaks, so He desires also to be trusted when He promises. If we hope and place our confidence in God, all the afflictions and tribulations to which we are here exposed will be sweetened. In the midst of all the miseries with which we are surrounded in this valley of tears, the lively expectations of that eternal bliss which awaits us in the next life, as the reward of all our sufferings, will support us under our many trials, and will fill us with joy and consolation.†

8. “To love Him” is another of “our chief duties to God”. The love of God or Charity is a supernatural and Divine virtue, by which we love Him above all things, because He is infinitely good and perfect. God strictly demands of us this duty of loving Him: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and

with thy whole strength", He says to us in the Book of Deuteronomy. Our Saviour confirms in the Gospel this command, adding also, that we ought to love God with our whole mind: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind; this is the greatest and first commandment"—*Matt.*, xxii. 37. Now in these words of the command, the love which we owe to God is laid down in the strongest terms; and it is evident from them that God requires the whole man to be employed in His love and service.

9. He not only commands us to love Him with all our different powers, but with the whole of each power. He requires that we should love Him above all things, that is, that we should prefer Him in our mind and heart, in our esteem and love, before everything else, without exception—that we must not only judge and believe that God is infinitely preferable to everything else, but we must in reality give Him the preference in our affections upon all occasions—that we must be willing and ready to part with everything, and, as St. Paul expresses it, to "suffer the loss of all things" rather than to lose Him by sin. Our Saviour speaks clearly and plainly on this point: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me"—*Matt.*, x. 37. We should love God for *His own sake*, that is, on account of Himself; because He is what He is, and not on account of the reward attached to our love of Him. To love God for His own sake, is to love Him on account of His infinite perfections; because He is the most beautiful, the most excellent of all things; because whatever is most beautiful, amiable, and lovely in all creatures, is but a faint image of the beauty, glory, and loveliness of God.

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10. Let us, then, dear children, practise this holy love of God, but let us practise it in a manner worthy of Him who is the object of it. Let us love God as He wishes to be loved by us, with our whole heart, our whole soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength—endeavouring to love Him every day more and more, so that all our thoughts, all our affections, all our desires, all our actions, should have no other end, but that of loving and pleasing Him. Oh! with what pure joy and holy consolation does the love of God fill the heart which it has once inflamed! All the pleasures which the world can afford are nothing, when compared with that delicious peace which God bestows on the soul that loves Him. He who truly loves God, finds in this holy love consolations which supply the place of all things else. His desires are satisfied—his heart is tranquil—nothing can trouble the calm of his soul: in poverty he is rich—in humiliation he is great—in sufferings he is filled with consolation. Let us then love God with our whole heart, and perform “our chief duties to Him”; for He is our first beginning and last end.

Q. Why do you make an Act of Contrition before the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity?

A. To obtain pardon of my sins, and thereby to render my prayers acceptable to God, and more beneficial to myself.

11. Before reciting “the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity”, we generally make an act of Contrition, or an act of sorrow for sin. By this act of Contrition we express to God our regret for having offended Him, we detest our sins by which we have so often offended Him, and we promise that in future we shall not offend Him more. This sorrow and purpose of amendment, move God to look down on us with mercy,

and obtain for us the pardon of our sins. When our many daily sins and imperfections have been pardoned by God, the prayers which we are about to offer Him will be more pleasing to Him, as proceeding from a heart disengaged from sin. These prayers will be "more beneficial" to ourselves, as they will be more readily heard by God; and the favours that we pray for will be more speedily granted, as our supplications will be presented by pure hearts and unsullied lips. Sin undoubtedly is a great obstacle to the effects of prayer; because a person in the state of sin is unworthy of God's favours; and as long as he is pleased with his condition, and "turneth away his ears from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination"—*Prov.*, xxviii. 9; but the moment *he desireth to be converted from his evil way*, his prayer shall "pierce the clouds"—*Eccl.*, xxxv. 21. The Publican mentioned in the Gospel was a sinner when he went up into the Temple to pray; but when he implored the Divine mercy, and was struck with sorrow to the heart, his prayer was so agreeable to God, that "he went down to his house justified"—*Luke*, xviii. 14.

Q. What is mental prayer?

A. Mental prayer is an elevation and application of our mind and heart to God, in order to adore, praise, and love Him, and also to obtain the graces that we stand in need of.

12. Mental prayer—from the Latin word *mens*, meaning soul or mind—is so called because it is altogether interior, and not manifested outwardly. Such is the prayer of him who, without opening his lips, humbles himself profoundly before God, and pays Him, *from the bottom of his heart*, the tribute of adoration, praise, love, and thanksgiving due to Him. Such is also that prayer which a poor sinner makes, who, bowed down at the foot of the altar, and without

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saying a single word or sending forth one sigh, demands from the *bottom of his heart*, pardon and mercy, and conjures the Lord to forget his iniquities, and not to enter into judgment with him. Mental prayer being then, a silent intercourse of the soul with her God, is frequently the most profitable kind of prayer. In it the mind is often more attentive, and the heart more ardent in its desires, and more urgent in its requests; and this it is which made St. Augustin say: "The great affair of our salvation is advanced more by sobs than by speeches—more by tears than by words".

13. Meditation does not consist in elevated thoughts, but in such as are good and profitable; nor in pious thoughts only, but in holy affections which arise from the thoughts, as the hatred of sin, the love of God, the fear of His judgments. The resolutions which are made in consequence of these thoughts and affections are also an essential part of meditation. So that to meditate is to apply our mind attentively to the truths of Salvation, to stir ourselves up, to love them, and to form good resolutions. Meditation is a serious and frequent reflection made in the presence of God, and by the assistance of His grace, upon the truths of Salvation, in order to know them perfectly, to love them, and to put them in practice.†

14. Meditation is most necessary for all Christians, and a most effectual means of securing Salvation; for, if meditation be nothing else but a frequent and serious reflection upon the truths of Salvation, in order to know them, to love them, and to practise them, it follows that meditation is most necessary to secure our Salvation. The truths of Salvation will make no impression on us without loving them; and we cannot love them without knowing them, nor can we know them without thinking seriously and reflect-

ing on them; and this serious reflection is what we call meditation. Hence the Scriptures attribute the frequent perdition of men, and the general depravity of morals, to the want of reflection: "With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is no one that considereth in the heart"—*Jer.*, xii. 11.†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS' REWARD OF FAITH.

* Constantius Chlorus, a wise and humane prince, esteemed and protected the Christian religion. For some time, however, he disguised his real disposition, and publicly declared that all Christians who held office in his court should offer sacrifice to Jupiter and to other pagan divinities, if they desired to retain their situations and his favour. Some, preferring temporal advantages to their eternal interests, immediately complied with the condition, little imagining that the prince merely intended to make trial of their virtue and fidelity. No sooner had they sacrificed, than he, indignant at their base apostacy, banished them contemptuously from his presence. One of his courtiers, greatly astonished, begged an explanation, to whom the emperor wisely replied: "Men who sacrifice religion to worldly interests are capable of infidelity to every obligation. Could I expect that those men whose disgrace has excited your surprise, would have proved faithful to me, after having acted so unfaithfully to their God?" Not content with punishing and humbling these apostates, he felt it a duty to reward those who had generously adhered to their religion regardless of consequences; he kept them continually about his person, and reposed in them the most unlimited confidence.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES TEMPTED.

† God permitted St. Francis of Sales to experience a most trying and dangerous temptation. While he was finishing his studies in Paris, being then only sixteen years of age, the enemy of man filled his imagination with the dismal

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thought that he was numbered among the reprobate. This temptation so afflicted his soul that it deprived him of his rest; he would neither eat nor drink; his sight became dim, and his strength visibly declined. His preceptor, perceiving the condition to which he was reduced, seeing that he took no pleasure in anything, and that a pale and sickly hue was settling on his countenance, inquired the cause of his melancholy; but Francis, prompted by the wicked enemy, concealed the temptation under which he was labouring. He no longer felt any pleasure in his spiritual exercises. Prayer, which had formerly been his delight, was now become a burden; even the remembrance of the delicious sweetness and calm which he had enjoyed in this delightful exercise, but increased the desolation with which his soul was visited. "Never", would he say to himself, "never can I hope to see the beauty of God's house, or drink of the torrent of its pleasures. O lovely tabernacles of the house of my God! never, never, shall I behold you!" He remained an entire month in this anguish and bitterness of heart, which he could compare to nothing, but pangs of death, and which, as he imagined, far exceeded anything which, on earth, a human being was capable of enduring. His days were passed in the most bitter agony, and at night he watered his bed with his tears. Having one day entered, by divine inspiration, into the Church of St. Stephen, to invoke the mercy of God, he knelt before an image of the Blessed Virgin, and begged of this "Comfortress of the Afflicted" to be his advocate with God, and to obtain for him the grace, that if he were so miserable as to be destined to hate God in eternity, he might at least love him with his whole heart while he remained on earth. A prayer, dictated by sentiments so remote from those of a reprobate, was immediately heard; the darkness which had overspread his mind was dissipated, and his soul was replenished with light and joy, with hope and consolation.

GERSON ON MEDITATION.

† Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, was so convinced of the excellency and efficacy of mental prayer, that he did not fear saying:—"Give me a person who makes every day a quarter of an hour's meditation, and I will insure his salvation". And St. Teresa tells us, that "he who neglects mental prayer has no need of devils to lead him into evil—he goes into it of his own accord; but to meditate, and at the same time persist in sin or lukewarmness, is impossible".

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Of all vocal prayers, which is the most perfect and excellent?
2. Why has the *Ave Maria* or Hail Mary been called so?
3. What mean the Apostles' Creed and General Confession?
4. Why are the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, an excellent form of prayer?
5. What is our first and chief duty to God?
6. What do you understand by hoping in God?
7. Does God command us to hope in Him?
8. Does God strictly require of us to love Him?
9. In what manner does God require that we should love Him?
10. What are the fruits produced by loving God?
11. Why does an Act of Contrition precede the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity?
12. What do you mean by meditation?
13. In what does meditation consist?
14. Is meditation necessary for salvation?

PRACTICE.

1. Recite every day, if possible, the acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.
2. In the commencement of prayer, always make an act of Contrition to God for your sins.
3. Practise daily meditation; for meditation and sin are incompatible.

PRAYER.

O divine Jesus! grant that I may always firmly believe in Thee, hope in Thee, and love Thee. Grant me the grace of prayer, that on all occasions and under all circumstances, I may have recourse to Thee. I acknowledge, O God! my weakness and inconstancy; and if not supported by Thee, I shall fall. Grant me perseverance in virtue, and to obtain it, and to strengthen myself in the practice of it, I resolve to meditate frequently on the great truths of eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Q. Who made the Lord's Prayer?

A. Jesus Christ (*Matt.*, vi. 9, 10).

1. "The Lord's Prayer" signifies the prayer of the Lord; the prayer of Jesus Christ—the prayer which is His in a particular manner, because He is the author of it. The Apostles, as we have already seen, composed the *Creed*; the *Hail Mary*, as we shall soon see, has been composed by the Angel Gabriel, conjointly with St. Elizabeth and the Church; but the Lord's Prayer has been made by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ not only has made the Lord's Prayer, but He has also recommended the Apostles, and in their persons all the faithful, to recite it often, knowing the great necessity of prayer. The Apostles said to Him one day: "Lord, teach us how to pray". Then the Lord dictated this short but admirable prayer, which the Church so often puts into our mouths, and which she so continually uses: "When you pray, you shall say, Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come", etc.—*Luke*, xi. 2. "The Lord's Prayer" is composed of a short preface, and seven petitions or requests, of which the three first directly regard the honour and glory of God; and the four last regard our own good, both for soul and body, together with the evils from which we beg to be delivered. These words: "Our Father Who art in heaven", make up the preface; the remaining words make up the petitions.

Q. Whom do you call "Our Father", when you say the Lord's Prayer?

A. Almighty God, who is the common Father of all.

2. This most endearing title of "Father" is placed in the very beginning of this prayer, rather than that of King, Lord, or Sovereign. "Almighty God" we call by "Our Father", for He "is the common Father of all". He is called Father, that we may recall to our minds the tenderness and goodness which Almighty God has shown us from all eternity, and also that we may approach Him with greater confidence. Children in their distresses and necessities go with more confidence to their father for succour and relief, because a father has naturally a tenderness for his children, and is inclined to assist them to the utmost of his power; so, in like manner, we ought to cry out to the Almighty for help with more confidence, and entertain the strongest hope of being heard by Him, and of obtaining all that we pray for, as we are commanded to go to Him, not as slaves to their master, but as children to their father.

3. Almighty God is called "Our Father", and not *my* Father, because, as we are all members of the same body, children of the same family, and are all engaged in the one common cause—the work of the salvation of souls—we should be interested in each other, and pray not only for ourselves, but for all the faithful, who are our brethren: "The emperor and the mendicant, the master and the servant, are brethren, having all the same Father"—*St. Aug.* We call Him "Our Father", moreover, because it is not in our own name that we pray, but in the name of Jesus Christ, and in union with the entire body of the Church, of which we are members, and of which He is "the common Father".*

4. After this endearing title of "Our Father", the following words are added: "Who art in Heaven". Mention is here made of *Heaven*, to give us to understand that when we begin our prayers we ought to raise our thoughts and minds to Heaven. But why do we not say: Our Father Who art on earth, as well as Who art in Heaven, since God is in every place by His immensity? The reason why *Heaven* is here particularly mentioned is, because Heaven is the noblest part of the universe, and, as it were, the palace and principal seat where God resides and manifests Himself to the elect with the greatest splendour and majesty; because Heaven is our true country—the inheritance which our loving Father has provided for us. When, therefore, we pray, we should elevate our thoughts and desires thither—unite ourselves to the society of the blessed Spirits, and excite in our hearts the desire and the hope of one day possessing God for ever in His blissful region.

Q. What means "Hallowed be Thy name"?

A. By this we beg that God's name may be praised and glorified by all His creatures.

5. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is, "Hallowed be Thy name". It is just that our first request should be, that the name of God may be rendered holy, honoured, and treated with due respect. As children of God, nothing should be so dear to us as the honour and glory of "Our Father". We begin, then, by praying, that His name may be hallowed; that is, honoured and glorified. The name of God is holy in itself—it cannot acquire any new degree of holiness—but it is frequently dishonoured by the language and conduct of men. What we ask by these words is, that the holy name of God may be

known, praised, and adored by all creatures—that every tongue may bless Him—that His glory may be extended to all the nations of the earth. There are infidels who know not God ; and by the first petition of our Lord's prayer, we beg of Him that they may be converted and be called to the light of the Gospel. There are heretics, who know God, but do not render Him true worship ; and by these words, "Hallowed be Thy name", we beg that they may renounce their errors, acknowledge the truth, and enter into the bosom of the true Church, out of which there is no salvation. By these words, we beg of "Our Father" that bad Christians, who profane and blaspheme His holy name, may be converted from their evil ways, may refrain from their scandalous practices, and begin to glorify Him by edifying conduct.

6. But what we ought chiefly to pray for is, that we may ourselves sanctify the name of God, consecrate our whole lives to His service, and cause Him to be honoured and glorified by others. This is the purport of the first petition ; and it is placed at the head of the rest, because a child of God ought first, and beyond all things, to seek the honour and glory of his Heavenly Father. In repeating this petition, "Hallowed be Thy name", we ought therefore have a sincere desire of procuring the glory of God, and of inducing others to honour Him, inspiring them by our language and conduct with a love of virtue and a relish for piety.

Q. What means "Thy kingdom come"?

A. By this we beg, that God may reign in our hearts by His grace in this life, and that we may reign for ever with Him in the next.

7. The second petition of the Lord's Prayer is "Thy kingdom come". By "Thy kingdom" is meant,

the kingdom of grace in this life, and the kingdom of glory in the next, or the eternal salvation of our souls. "Thy kingdom" means not only eternal glory in Heaven, for which we hope after the miseries of this life are ended, but also the grace of Jesus Christ, whereby He reigns spiritually and sovereignly in our souls here on earth. Such is the kingdom which we desire that God should establish in us at present. We ask, therefore, by this petition, "that God may reign in our hearts, by His grace, in this life"—we beg that the devil may never exercise any dominion over us—that sin may not reign in our hearts—that passion may not overrule us, but that, believing and practising in this life what Christ has commanded, we may, through His merits, be entitled to "reign for ever with Him in the next". We beg that we may possess Him for ever, may be put in possession of all His riches and treasures, may be filled with the abundance of His house, and may be inebriated with the torrents of its delights. This should be the object of our desires and hopes, the consolation of our pains and labours.

Q. What means "Thy will be done"?

A. By this we beg, that God would enable us by His grace to do His will in all things on earth, as the Angels and Saints do it in Heaven.

8. The third petition is, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven". As the perfect accomplishment of the reign of God—the object of the foregoing petition—is not to be expected in this world, we are taught in the mean time to beg that His glory be so far promoted upon earth, that all human beings may submit willingly to His orders, acquiesce in His appointments, and fulfil His will. By this petition,—“Thy will be done on earth as it

in Heaven",—we pray that all mankind may obey God—that we may be always resigned to His holy will under all circumstances, as well in adversity as in prosperity—that we may be pleased with whatever He sends us, whether sickness, misfortunes, or death.†

9. As it is the will of God that we should be saved, we beg of Him, by this petition, that He may enable us to keep His Commandments and those of the Church; we beg that we may every day of our lives fulfil all the duties of our holy religion. We also beg that all men should accomplish the holy will of God "in all things", and thus imitate the Angels and Saints in Heaven, doing His will with the same zeal, promptitude, affection, and love—performing our duties with satisfaction and pleasure, because they are imposed on us by God. In Heaven God is obeyed with punctuality and ardour; is it thus we obey? Are we faithful in obeying God's Commandments? Are we submissive to those who hold His place in our regard?

Q. What means "Give us this day our daily bread"?

A. By this we beg for all necessities for our souls and bodies.

10. Having already implored in the first three petitions what may conduce to the glory of God, we beg in this and the subsequent petitions for daily food for the body and soul—for what may contribute to our salvation. What had been implied in the preceding petitions—a solicitation of the grace of God—is now positively expressed. Every word in this petition merits particular attention. The word bread in Scripture phrase, signifies "all necessities for our souls and bodies". By it is meant not only the food and raiment which our bodies stand in need of, but

also the spiritual bread or nourishment of our souls, such as the word of God, the grace of God, and the holy Sacraments—especially the Blessed Eucharist—which Christ instituted for the sanctification and nourishment of our souls, and without which the soul is weak and feeble. The word of God nourishes the soul. It preserves the just, and makes them advance in justice. It heals sinners, and leads them back to the life of grace which they had lost. The grace of God is as necessary for the life of the soul as material bread is to preserve the life of the body. We stand continually in need of its assistance; and God wills that, to obtain it, we pray for it daily. The Holy Eucharist is the nourishment of the soul. Jesus Christ Himself assures us of it, for He says to us: “Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you”—*John*, vi. Thus far as regards the wants of the soul.

11. God is the source of every good—it is He who provides for all our wants both as to soul and body. We are all in His sight as beggars, who possess nothing. The rich themselves are to ask for the sustenance of the body as well as the poor, because the rich, as well as the poor, depend on God. Yet the rich and poor are to desire only a moderate competency, and therefore are allowed only to ask for the bread of the day—“Our daily bread”. We say in this petition, “give us this day”, and not give me this day, to signify the brotherly love which Christians are to have for each other, and to remind them that they are to wish unto others what they wish unto themselves, according to reason and the law of charity. We pray for “our daily bread”, that is, “all necessities for our souls and bodies”, according to our state, and not for superfluities. We ask it only for the present day—“this day”, and not for to-morrow

—to teach us that we are to recite the prayer every day; and after using our own endeavours, we should rely on the providence of God, and not give ourselves too much trouble, uneasiness, or anxiety of mind about to-morrow, which we may not live to see, according to these words of our Saviour: “Be not, therefore, solicitous for to-morrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself: sufficient for the day is the evil thereof”—*Matt.*, vi. 34.

Q. What means “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us”?

A. By this we beg that God would forgive us our offences, as we forgive them that offend us.

12. This and the two following petitions of the Lord’s Prayer treat of the evils from which we beg to be delivered, as the four first petitions treat of the things that are necessary both for soul and body. The fifth petition is, “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us”. By “our trespasses” are meant our sins and offences, by which we are made debtors to the justice of God; and when we say “forgive us our trespasses”, we ask God for mercy and pardon, and “beg that He would forgive us our offences as we forgive them that offend us”—we acknowledge our guilt, express our regret, and promise amendment for the future. He who makes this prayer should first acknowledge, and in the next place regret, his sin. Without sorrow, no sin whatever, either mortal or venial, can be forgiven; and God pardons those only who, with a sincere regret for having offended Him, have a firm resolution of sinning no more. Having this disposition, one is sure to be heard favourably, and of being soon perfectly reconciled to God.

13. But would it be just to expect “that God

would forgive us our offences", if we refuse to pardon those who have offended us? We say daily to God, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us"; that is, we call on the Lord to forgive us "as we forgive them that offend us". The pardon which we grant to others is the measure, then, of that which we ask God for ourselves. In begging of the Lord to forget our iniquities, and not to enter into judgment with us—in praying to Him to grant us pardon of our transgressions, we ask Him to act towards us as we act towards others; we ask Him to pardon us the offences which we have committed against His majesty, as we forgive all the injuries and injustices which others have committed against us.

Q. Will God forgive our offences if we do not forgive our enemies and all those who have offended us?

A. No; God will show no mercy to us, unless we forgive from our hearts our enemies and all those who have offended or injured us.—*Matt.*, xviii. 35.

14. If we pardon "our enemies", God will pardon us; but if we refuse to pardon them "and all those who have offended us", we have no pardon to expect of God. On this condition of forgiving others, we are to look to God for pardon. God will have it so, and absolutely, without any exception, commands it: "I say to you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you"—*Matt.*, v. 44. He commands it in such a manner, that He will "show no mercy to us unless we forgive from our hearts our enemies and all those who have offended us". You will say that this is difficult. It is true, it is difficult to flesh and

blood ; but the difficulty will not exempt us from the obligation of the command.

15. Let us learn then, dear children, from the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, to forgive the injuries done us by others—never to harbour in our mind any hatred against our neighbour ; and whatever offences he may have committed against you, never to entertain desires of revenge against him, nor wish him ill. To offer this petition, and at the same time to nourish in our hearts resentment against “those who have offended us”, our prayer should run thus : “Pardon me not, O Lord ! because I will not pardon those who have injured me. I desire to be revenged of them, and do Thou be revenged of me. Were it in my power, I would at once take revenge ; do Thou then at once exercise vengeance immediately on me”. Thus would we pass sentence of condemnation on ourselves, by praying that God should treat us as we treat our neighbour.

Q. What means “lead us not into temptation” ?

A. By this we beg that God would strengthen us against all temptations.

16. In the foregoing petition we deplored our past sins : in this, we take our precautions against future offences, by professing our good resolutions to avoid sin and its occasions, and by asking the grace of perseverance. It is not enough that God should pardon our past sins ; we require grace to preserve us from sin in future. We are every moment in danger of offending God, as we are continually surrounded with temptations, and therefore we must have recourse to the protection of God, saying to Him with fervour : “Lead us not into temptation”. In this sixth peti-

tion, we beg that God may not leave us to our weakness, nor abandon us in danger, but that He "should strengthen us in all temptations", and enable us to triumph over them, so as to come off victorious in the day of trial. We are every day tempted by the world, the devil, and our passions: the world tempts us by its bad example; the devil tempts us by making impressions on our senses and imaginations which tend to suggest evil thoughts and desires; our own passions—our strong inclination to evil—continually tempt us. If we be not supported by the grace of God under these temptations, we must fall and yield to them; but if we be assisted by Him, we shall overcome them.

17. Temptation "is not a sin if we consent not to it"; but it is an occasion of merit when resisted, and our resistance God will one day recompense. In praying to God to "lead us not into temptation", we do not pray that God would exempt us entirely from it. That would be desiring a particular favour, which is seldom granted to any one. The greatest saints have been obliged to meet the assaults of "temptations". Even our Lord permitted Himself to be tempted, that He might teach us the manner of resisting temptations, and obtaining for ourselves graces to overcome them. What we ask by the sixth petition is, that we may not be abandoned in our temptations—that under all those with which God may be pleased to afflict us, He may give us help and support, and the strength necessary to overcome them.†

Q. What means "deliver us from evil"?

A. By this we beg that God would deliver us, in body and soul, from all evil, particularly that of sin.

18. The seventh and last petition of the Lord's Prayer is, "deliver us from evil". When we demand of God to "deliver us from evil", we beg of Him to deliver us from the miseries of this life, from the enemies of our souls, and from eternal damnation. By this seventh petition we beg of God to deliver us from all the evils with which we may be visited in this world—sickness, pain, infirmities, miseries, poverty, war, famine, plagues, persecutions, and other like scourges, which we suffer in "body". However, when we thus pray to be delivered from *bodily* evils, sufferings, and afflictions, it should be conditionally and with resignation to the will of God. This condition is implied in the petition itself, for we beg to be delivered only from what is evil. But there is no true evil but that which puts an obstacle to our salvation. If infirmities, poverty, calamities, are called evils, it is because they are the cause of repining, discontent, murmuring, and sometimes blasphemy, as we have not sufficient virtue to bear these evils patiently and with submission to the will of God. We are permitted, indeed, to desire and ask deliverance from them, provided we are submissive to the will of God, and disposed to suffer them with submission, if He judges it useful or necessary to our salvation. In praying thus, we will find the true remedy of our evils; for God will mercifully hear us, and will either deliver us from them, or, what is much better, enable us to bear them.

19. By this seventh and last petition, we beg to be delivered not only from the evils of the body, but also from the evils of the soul, and "particularly that of sin". We beg to be delivered from the enemies of our salvation, from the deceits of the devil, who is the author of all "evil", and from the punishments due to our transgressions. In fine, we beg of God that

He would deliver us from that evil "of sin", and particularly that of mortal sin. Sin is the greatest of all evils, or, rather, it is the only real evil. If it be mortal, it kills the soul, it destroys the friendship of God, and brings on us eternal damnation; and if it be only venial, it lessens the grace of God, it disposes us for mortal sin, and on that account, may be the cause of our damnation. It is, then, from the evil of sin that we should in particular beg of God to be delivered, when we say "deliver us from evil". We should pray to be delivered from mortal sin, a hardened heart, final impenitence, and eternal damnation hereafter.

20. The word "Amen", with which the Lord's Prayer is concluded, is a Hebrew word frequently used by our Saviour, and meaning *so be it*, or *let it be done*; that is, we pray that all we have sued for in the foregoing petitions may be done and granted to us. We have now, dear children, given you an explanation of the Seven Petitions of the Lord's Prayer. It is the most excellent prayer that we can say; for it has been taught us by Jesus Christ Himself; and when we recite it, let it be always with recollection, piety, fervour, and devotion.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PRAYER "OUR FATHER" A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION

* A young shepherd had the custom of praying while he attended his flock in the interior of the country. Being asked if he felt lonely, and if his time did not pass heavily in a place so removed from society, he replied that his time passed quickly, and agreeably too, by means of the "Our Father", in which he discovered an exhaustless source of consoling thoughts and pious sentiments. Such, he said, was the delight

which it afforded him, that to meditate on the entire prayer but once, would give him sufficient mental occupation for a whole week.

JOB'S SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.

† Job was possessed of very large worldly goods, but his virtue was more conspicuous than his wealth. He was, says the Scripture, a just man, simple and fearing God. Satan having obtained permission from God to afflict Job in order to try his patience, let fall on him at the same time many grievous evils. His cattle were taken and slain, his sheep were consumed by fire, and his seven sons and three daughters were killed by the house falling on them. Intelligence of these misfortunes reached the ear of Job at the same time, but he murmured not. He accused neither the devil, nor his enemies, nor the fire of heaven, as being the cause of so many evils and misfortunes to him. In these evils he saw the will of God, and adored and blessed it. "The Lord hath given", he says; "the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". The devil, seeing that the many evils inflicted on Job did not change his heart, but that he still continued simple and upright, fearing God, asked of God the power of tormenting Job's body. It was obtained, and he immediately struck Job with a frightful ulcer from head to foot. In this sad state, he was forced to go out of the house and sit on a dunghill, and there scrape off with a potsherd the corrupt matter flowing from his sore. There now remained to him, under his afflictions, only his wife. Instead of being to him a consoler, she commenced upbraiding him, and urged him to blaspheme God, and then die. But the holy man, always submissive and resigned, answered her: "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"
—Job.

ST. BASIL'S RESISTANCE OF TEMPTATION.

† St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Cæsarea, rather than commit sin, resisted constantly the unjust order of the Emperor Valens, an Arian and a persecutor of the Catholics. Valens sent the prefect Modestus to Cæsarea, with orders to prevail on Basil, by threats and promises, to communicate with the Arians. The saint being summoned by the prefect, came before him with a cheerful and undaunted countenance.

Modestus, assuming a haughty air, said to St. Basil: "What dost thou mean by opposing so great an emperor, whom all obey? Art thou under no apprehension of feeling the effects of the power we are armed with?" "To what does this power extend?" St. Basil replied. Modestus answered, "To confiscation of goods, banishment, tortures, death". "If you can threaten me with anything worse than death, do so; for none of all these things give me the least uneasiness", said the saint. "How so?" asked Modestus. "He that has nothing to lose", answered the saint, "is secure against confiscation. I am master of nothing but a few books and the rags I wear, neither of which, I presume, you have any occasion for. As to banishment, I know of no such thing in your power to inflict upon me, who account not the country I now inhabit my own. Heaven is my only country. I as little fear your torments: my emaciated body cannot hold out long under them; the first stroke will despatch me, and put an end both to my life and pain. Much less do I dread death, which I regard as a favour; for it will bring me sooner to my Creator, for whom alone I live". Modestus again said: "Never did any man yet talk at this rate of freedom, and so unconcernedly, to Modestus". "Perhaps", replied Basil, "this is the first time you ever had to do with a bishop. In all other occurrences we bishops are, of all men living, the meekest and most submissive; but where the cause of God and religion is at stake, we overlook all things else, regarding God alone. Your fire, daggers, beasts, and burning pincers in this case are our option and delight: you may threaten and torment us, but never can overcome us". The prefect could not but admire the saint's intrepidity; and going out next day to meet the emperor, who was coming into the city, he informed him of what had passed between himself and Basil, and expressed his astonishment at his heroic courage. Modestus afterwards ventured upon a third attack, but was equally unsuccessful, and at last said to the emperor: "We are overcome: this man is above our threats".—*Alban Butler*.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. By whom has the Lord's Prayer been made and recommended?
2. Why do we call Almighty God Father?

3. Why is Almighty God called our Father?
4. Why do we say "Our Father who art in Heaven"?
5. In what way can we render holy the name of God?
6. Why is the petition, "Hallowed be Thy name", placed at the head of the others?
7. What do you mean by the prayer, "Thy kingdom come"?
8. What do you mean by the prayer, "Thy will be done"?
9. In what manner should we do the will of God?
10. What is principally meant by "daily bread"?
11. Why do we say "this day" and "our daily" in this petition?
12. What is meant by the word "trespass" in the fifth petition?
13. What is the measure of the pardon which we ask of God for ourselves?
14. Will God forgive us our sins if we refuse to forgive those who injure us?
15. If we pardon not our enemies, could we say to God, "forgive us our trespasses"?
16. What are the sources of temptations?
17. When we say, "Lead us not into temptation", do we beg of God to preserve us from every temptation?
18. What do you pray for when you say, "Deliver us from evil"?
19. What in particular do we pray for when we say, "Deliver us from evil"?
20. What is the meaning of the word "Amen"?

PRACTICE.

1. Often recite the "Our Father", but let it be with the greatest devotion, for Jesus Christ composed it.
2. In praying to God for your "daily bread", beg in particular that God may strengthen you with His grace.
3. In begging of God to be delivered from evil, forget not that sin is the greatest of all evils.

PRAYER.

O heavenly Father! best of all fathers, grant us all the graces we require. Grant us, in particular, our daily bread: nourish our souls daily, and strengthen us with the bread of Heaven. We have frequently offended Thee, but we now implore forgiveness of our many transgressions, and promise

that we shall forgive others all the offences committed against us. We are, O heavenly Father, weak and frail, and subject every moment to temptation, and if not assisted by your powerful hand, we shall be overcome. Aid us, then; protect us from the many dangers which surround us, and deliver us now, and at every time, from every evil. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

Q. Who made the Hail Mary?

A. The Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth made the first part of it, and the Church made the last. *Luke, i. 28.*

1. After reciting the "Lord's Prayer", the faithful are generally accustomed, from ancient usage, in order more easily to obtain what they have prayed for, to pronounce that congratulatory address with which the Angel Gabriel approached the Blessed Virgin, when he announced to her the happy tidings of the Incarnation of the Son of God in her womb. To this they add another short address, that by which the same holy Virgin was saluted by her cousin St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. Both combined, are concluded with a short request, which the Catholic Church has added.

2. The Angelical Salutation is called the "Ave Maria", or "Hail Mary", from the first words with which it begins. It is composed of three parts. The first part: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women", was made by the Angel. The second part: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of

thy womb", was made by St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. The third part: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death", was made by our holy Mother the Church.

3. The word "Hail" is a word of salutation, congratulating, or wishing joy to our Blessed Lady for her happiness. "Hail", is a word of joy and happiness; not only because it filled Mary with joy, but still more because it announced to us that this incomparable Virgin was to bring forth Him who was to be the Redeemer of the world. It is a word that made Heaven and earth glad, because it pointed out that Mary was to become the Mother of God, the Queen of Angels, the Queen and Mother of mankind. "Hail Mary". The name "Mary", according to the explanation of St. Bernard, signifies "Star of the Sea", because the Blessed Virgin, like a bright star, guides us through the dangerous sea of this life by the example of her shining virtues, and by her powerful intercession. The Angel did not at first pronounce her name, when he said "Hail". It was only when she expressed surprise at his words, that he, in answer, styled her "Mary": "Fear not, Mary". The Church it is who has placed the word Mary immediately after the word "Hail".

4. When the first greeting word "Hail", had been pronounced, Mary is declared by the celestial messenger "full of grace". That which entitled Mary to be styled "full of grace", was neither her noble origin nor her illustrious birth, nor her modesty, nor her beauty. The Angel pronounced her "full of grace", because she was exempted from all sin, original and actual, mortal and venial, and because she was enriched with faith, hope, and charity, and every moral virtue in the most eminent degree. With truth may Mary be styled "full of grace", because she alone

had the extraordinary privilege of possessing it in such plenitude, that she was selected to receive into her womb the Author of grace. Mary is the daughter of God the Father, from whom flows, as St. Paul says, every perfect gift and every grace. She is the spouse of the Holy Ghost, who is the source of grace, and she is destined to bear in her womb Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who confers grace. We must, therefore, conclude, that she was enriched with such an abundance of grace as to justify us in saying, that she was endowed with a plenitude of grace which no other creature ever received.

5. The Angel having said that she was "full of grace", adds, that the Lord was with her: "the Lord is with thee". God is in every place, it is true: He is in Heaven—He is on earth—He is in hell by His justice, which He exercises on the reprobate souls—He is in the souls of the just by His grace, which renders them pleasing in His sight; but He is with Mary in a more particular and more wonderful manner. He was with her from the very instant of her conception, to render her pure and spotless. He not only ornaments her with all the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, but He willed, moreover, to be with her as the guardian of a treasure so precious.

6. The Archangel Gabriel said in continuation to the Blessed Virgin, that she was blessed among all women: "Blessed art thou amongst women". St. Elizabeth addressed her in the same words, when the Blessed Virgin visited her. And we should not be surprised that the very words should be used by the Angel and St. Elizabeth; for the Holy Ghost had dictated them to both one and the other. But in what manner is the Virgin blessed among all women? She was "blessed", in having been chosen in preference to all other women to commu-

nicate to mankind the source of all good and the ocean of all grace. She was "blessed" among all women, because she received a fulness of grace proportioned to the dignity to which she was chosen. On this account, all generations honour her and call her "blessed", regarding her as the centre in which all the blessings of the Old and New Testament are drawn together, and as the fertile root of Jesse which produced that ever-blessed Jesus, who redeemed the world with the sacred blood that was formed of her substance. She brought to all men joy, happiness, and life. With good reason, then, it is that the Angel and St. Elizabeth declared that she was "blessed among all women".

7. "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb" was addressed to the Blessed Virgin by St. Elizabeth, when the Mother of God went up into the hilly country of Judea, and entered the house of her cousin. It is not merely on her own account that she is blessed and honoured, but principally on account of the "fruit" of her chaste womb, which is no other than Jesus Christ the Son of God, the source of all the blessings and graces granted to Mary. Jesus Christ took flesh in the womb of the Virgin; the flesh of Jesus Christ is the flesh of Mary, as it had been formed in her womb by the operation of the Holy Ghost. And as the glorious prerogatives of a son redound to the honour of the mother who brought him forth, in like manner, the privileges and perfections of this divine Son made blest and made worthy of a thousand benedictions the most pure womb of Mary, who had conceived Him, borne Him during nine months, and brought Him forth in so glorious a manner. Elizabeth did not add the name "Jesus"; it was inserted in this place by the Church, as the word "Mary" was inserted after "Hail", the first word addressed to Mary by the Angel.

8. "The Church made the last" part of the Hail Mary, and is a pious invocation of the Blessed Virgin's intercession. It was in the council of Ephesus, held in the year 431, that the Church defined against the Nestorian heretics, that our Blessed Lady is the Mother of God, and added to the Angelical Salutation the words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death". The Blessed Virgin is "holy", because she had been sanctified from her conception; because, during life, she was exempt from all sin; because she was filled with all graces; and because she had been raised to the most exalted holiness.*

9. "Holy Mary, Mother of God".—Mary is indeed the Mother of God, for she conceived the Son of God in her virginal womb by the power of the Holy Ghost. Mary is not mother of the *divinity* of Jesus Christ. She is, however, Mother of God; because she conceived and brought forth Jesus Christ, in whom the divine and human nature are so united as to form but one Person. So that Mary is entitled to the name of the Mother of the Creator of Heaven and earth, because she conceived and brought forth in time Him whom the Father begot from all eternity. This is an Article of Faith, which has always been the belief of the Catholic Church; and all the holy Fathers have given to Mary the title of Mother of God.†

10. In the fourth century, Nestorius maintained that the Blessed Virgin was not the Mother of God, as the Son that she brought forth was not a *divine* but a *human* person. This attempt to deprive Mary of her glorious title alarmed the entire Catholic Church. A Council was summoned at Ephesus to consider this strange doctrine. Nestorius was condemned, and then deposed and banished to the oasis between Egypt and Lybia. He died in misery. A cancer rotted his tongue, it is said, which was eaten by

the worms engendered by the disease. Mary being Mother of God, she is all-powerful with her Son, and therefore we call on her to "pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death".

11. We are, dear children, indeed "sinners". We humbly acknowledge it in this prayer. But having the Mother of God as an advocate, we call on her to pray for us. We ask her to "pray for us now" and at every moment of our lives, because we always stand in need of her advocacy and protection. But though we avow our constant want of her aid, this assistance we chiefly implore for the "hour of our death"—for that dreadful hour, when we shall be least able to help ourselves, and when our enemies will redouble their efforts against us. We pray to the Mother of God, the refuge of sinners, and the Mother of pity and comfort, to forsake us not, in those last critical moments, upon the event of which depends our happiness or misery for an eternity. We call on her to redouble her maternal tenderness and solicitude at "the hour of our death", sustain us in that last conflict, and fortify us against its terrors.†

Q. Is it lawful to honour the Virgin Mary?

A. Yes; whereas God Himself so much honours her; and the Scripture says: "All generations shall call her blessed"—*Luke*, i. 48

12. Is it "lawful to honour the Blessed Virgin", and that with a degree of veneration superior to that which is due to the Angels and Saints? It is lawful to honour her, because she is, as we have already said, the Mother of God. For nine months did the Blessed Virgin Mary carry our Redeemer in her holy womb. She brought Him forth in the crib at Bethlehem; wept over His infant body, and wiped away His tears. She tended Him during His young days;

she was the companion of all His torments and sufferings ; she stood at the foot of the cross when all had abandoned Him, and received Him when dead into her arms. For these reasons, we honour her and pay her that veneration and respect to which, from her glorious privileges, she is entitled.

13. "Whereas God Himself so much honoured her", why should it not be lawful for us to honour the Blessed Virgin? Immediately after the fall of our first parents, God honours her by pointing her out, four thousand years before the event, as the person whose seed should crush the serpent's head. God honours her, by selecting her, of all the daughters of Eve, to be the mother of His Son. God honours her by sending a Heavenly messenger to announce to her that she was to bring forth the Redeemer of the world. As God has so honoured the Blessed Virgin, why should we not honour, respect, and venerate her? It is lawful to honour her, for she herself tells us, as we read in St. Luke, that "all generations shall call me blessed". And all generations have pronounced her "blessed", and at the present day she is pronounced "blessed" by the great majority of Christians.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MARY'S POWERFUL INTERCESSION.

* A soldier recited every day seven *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of the seven joys and seven sorrows of the Mother of God. He became so attached to this pious practice, that he very rarely omitted it. If, after going to bed, he remembered he had not performed this devotion, he arose, and placing himself on his knees, paid this tribute of respect to his good mother. Being once placed in one of the foremost lines, fronting the enemy, while the army, drawn up in battle array,

awaited the signal of attack, he remembered that he had not on that day said his accustomed prayers to the Blessed Virgin. He blessed himself, and commenced to recite them. Some of his comrades, perceiving him make the Sign of the Cross, and seeing him at his prayers, began to mock him, calling him a poltroon and a coward. Others said he was a silly devotee. The soldier, taking no notice of their railleries, continued his prayers, which he had no sooner ended than the battle commenced. His comrades fell everywhere around him, some killed, others severely wounded; and of the whole company to which he belonged, this client of Mary was the only one who escaped unhurt. When the war was over, he received his discharge: he returned to his own country, and ever after believed that he owed his preservation to the Blessed Virgin's intercession. He never ceased to thank her for her protection, and to rejoice that he had retained the pious sentiments with which, in his childhood, his parents had inspired him. —*St. Liguori.*

MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

† The famous victory of Lepanto will be an eternal monument of the power of the Mother of God, and of her title to the appellation of "Help of Christians", since it is to her that Christendom is indebted for the miraculous victory which the Christians gained over the Turks in the year 1571. Selim, the son of Solyman, emperor of the Turks, having rendered himself master of the island of Cyprus, came with a powerful army to attack the Venetians, promising himself nothing less than the empire of the whole Christian world. The holy pope, St. Pius V., Philip II., of Spain, and the Venetians, united to arrest the career of the common enemy. Although their forces were far inferior in numbers to those of the Turks, yet, relying upon the protection of the Mother of God, the Christians did not doubt of success in this glorious enterprise. Prayers for their success were offered throughout Christendom. The faithful repaired in great numbers to the church of Loretto, to implore the assistance of Heaven, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin; and Don John of Austria, general of the army, made a vow to go in person to visit this sanctuary. The Christians obtained what they asked; for the two fleets having come to an engagement on the 7th of October, the enemy lost in the battle, which lasted from morning until night, thirty thousand men, and above two hundred ships and galleys, besides ninety that were stranded. One hundred and sixteen pieces of great cannon,

with two hundred and fifty-six smaller, and five thousand prisoners, fell into the hands of the Christians. Don John of Austria, as soon as the affairs with which he was charged permitted, went to Loretto in the depth of winter to fulfil his vow. Pope St. Pius V., fully convinced that this victory was to be ascribed to the intercession of the Mother of God, inserted in her litany the words, "Help of Christians, pray for us", and instituted the Festival of the Rosary, as perpetual memorials of this great benefit. Gregory XIII. afterwards transferred this festival to the first Sunday of October, which is therefore called "Rosary Sunday".—*Hist. Eccl.*

THE GREAT EFFICACY OF THE "HAIL MARYS".

‡ In the year 1604, there were in the city of Flanders two young students, who instead of attending to the acquisition of learning, sought only the indulgence of the appetite and the gratification of their unchaste passions. One night they went to a house of ill-fame; after some time, one of them, called Richard, returned home, and the other remained. After having reached his house, Richard, while undressing to go to bed, remembered that he had not said the "Hail Marys" which he was accustomed to recite every day in honour of the Virgin. Being oppressed with sleep, he felt a great repugnance to say them; however, he did violence to himself and recited the usual "Hail Marys", without devotion, and half asleep. He went to bed, and during his first sleep, he heard a loud knock at the door, and instantly saw before him his companion, presenting a deformed and hideous appearance. "Who are you?" said Richard. "Do you not know me?" replied the other. "How", rejoined Richard, "have you undergone such a change? You look like a demon". "Ah! unhappy me", exclaimed the other, "I am damned. In leaving that infamous house I was strangled. My body lies in the street, and my soul is in hell. Know that the same chastisement awaited you, but the Blessed Virgin, on account of the little devotion of reciting the 'Hail Marys', has saved you from it". Richard, shedding a torrent of tears, fell prostrate on the ground, to thank Mary, his deliverer, and while he was reflecting on a change of life, he heard the bell of the Franciscans calling them to matins. He then went instantly to the convent, and entreated the fathers to receive him. Being aware of the wicked life he had led, they at first refused; but he related with tears all that had happened. They then received him into the convent. Richard began to lead an exemplary life. He afterwards went to the Indies to

preach the faith; he then passed into Japan; and in the end, had the happiness of being burned alive, and of dying a martyr for Jesus Christ.—*St. Liguori*.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What prayer is generally recited after the Lord's Prayer?
2. Of how many parts is the Hail Mary composed?
3. What mean the words Hail Mary?
4. What was it that entitled Mary to be greeted as "full of grace"?
5. In what way was the Lord with Mary?
6. In what manner was Mary blessed among women?
7. On what account principally is Mary blessed among women?
8. At what time was the "Holy Mary" adopted by the Church?
9. Can Mary be properly called the Mother of God?
10. Who first denied that the Blessed Virgin was Mother of God?
11. Should we pray to the Blessed Virgin, particularly at the hour of death?
12. Why is it that we honour the Blessed Virgin?
13. In what way has God honoured the Blessed Virgin?

PRACTICE.

1. Always consider the "Hail Mary" a most holy and efficacious prayer; for it is composed of the most sacred words, and highly approved of by the Church.
2. In reciting the "Hail Mary", deeply reflect on what the words convey, and recite them with faith and love.
3. Often recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin, but particularly in the morning and at night.

PRAYER.

O Mary, Mother of God! we this day present ourselves to thee, who art the queen of heaven and earth. Cast thy eyes upon us poor sinners. God has made thee rich, that thou mightest relieve the poor, and hast constituted thee queen of

mercy, that thou mightest be able to assist the miserable. Cast thy eyes upon us, and have pity on us. Thou hast been selected by the adorable Trinity to become the mother of Jesus Christ; the Angel Gabriel announced the tidings to thee, and declared that the Lord was with thee. Intercede then, dear mother, with thy Son for us: obtain for us the grace of loving Him here, that we may enjoy Him and thee in Heaven for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Q. What honour do we give our Blessed Lady?

A. We honour her more than all the other Saints, because she is the Mother of God; but we never give her Divine or Supreme honour, which is due to God alone.

1. The "honour" and veneration which we give to the Saints in Heaven, are due to them on account of their great dignity, their connection with Jesus Christ, and the high privileges which they enjoy. It follows, therefore, that the more sublime the dignity of any Saint be, the nearer is he connected with Jesus Christ, and the greater the privileges he enjoys, the greater are the honour and veneration due to him. Now, as the Blessed Virgin is elevated in rank, dignity, and glory, above all other Saints, and even above the highest Angels themselves, it follows necessarily that the "honour" and veneration due to her are super-eminently greater than that which we owe to all the other Saints and Angels.

2. "We honour her more than all the other Saints, because she is Mother of God". That which entitles "all the other Saints" to our homage and

veneration, is their being the friends and faithful servants of God ; that is the glorious title which the Scripture bestows on them. But Mary has not been merely the friend and faithful "handmaid of the Lord", but she has been in reality the Mother of God. She has borne in her womb Him whom the whole world cannot contain. He who created all other beings received His body from her. She is Mother of God by the nearest ties of flesh and blood. He is flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone—His sacred body was formed of her flesh, and fed and nourished by her blood, so that her connection with Him is that of a Mother with the Son of her womb. For this reason it is that we "honour her more than all the other Saints". In honouring Mary we honour Jesus ; when we respect the Mother we respect the Son.

3. Hence it is that so many solemn Festivals have been devoted to her in the course of the year—so many churches throughout the Christian world have been dedicated to God under her patronage—so many altars erected—so many Religious orders and Confraternities have been instituted under the invocation of her name—so many holy Doctors and learned writers have employed both their tongues and pens in recommending a true devotion to her, as not only "lawful" in itself, but also as redounding to the honour and glory of God.

4. "But we never give her Divine or Supreme honour, which is due to God alone". We never give the Blessed Virgin "Divine or Supreme honour", for that would be impiety and blasphemy. Whatever excellencies we attribute to the Blessed Virgin, or whatever terms we make use of to express the esteem and respect we have for her, we must always regard her as a *pure creature*, and therefore infinitely below God, depending on Him, and indebted to Him for all the gifts of nature and grace she possessed in

this life, and for the great glory to which she is exalted in Heaven. Our belief is that the Blessed Virgin is a *pure creature*—that she is to be honoured no otherwise than as such—and that it is a sacrilege and idolatry to offer Sacrifice to her, or to “give her the Divine and Supreme honour which is due to God alone”. The Blessed Virgin aspires to no such honour; but being placed before God’s throne, at the head of all the Angels and Saints, she presents our petitions to Him, and joins her prayers with ours to render them acceptable to Him.

Q. Why do Catholics so often repeat the Hail Mary and the Holy Mary?

A To honour the mystery of the Incarnation, which that prayer expresses, and to show their great respect and devotion to the Mother of God, and their special confidence in her assistance, particularly at the hour of death.

5. The reason “Catholics so often repeat the Hail Mary and Holy Mary” is, “to honour the mystery of the Incarnation, which that prayer expresses”. In reciting the “Hail Mary and Holy Mary”, we honour and thank God for the mystery of the Incarnation; we recall with gratitude to our minds His infinite goodness in descending from His bright throne in Heaven, and becoming Man, in order to open Heaven for us. In reciting this prayer we honour the Blessed Virgin, who had so great a part in the mystery of the Incarnation, having borne in her chaste womb Jesus the Son of God.

6. “To show their great respect and devotion to the Mother of God, and their special confidence in her assistance, particularly at the hour of death”, is another reason why “Catholics repeat so often the

Hail Mary and Holy Mary". The Archangel Gabriel addressed the salutation, "Hail, full of grace", to the Blessed Virgin with profound reverence and awe. He was accustomed to the lustre of the highest Heavenly Spirits, but was amazed at the dignity and grandeur of her whom he came to salute Mother of God. With what humility, then, ought we, poor worms of the earth and ungrateful creatures, address to her the same salutation? The devout Thomas à Kempis says: "The heavens rejoice, and all the earth ought to stand amazed, when I say Hail Mary: sorrow is banished, and a new joy fills my soul, when I say Hail Mary: so great is the sweetness of this blessed salutation, that it is not to be expressed in words, but remains deeper in the heart than can be fathomed".

7. "To show their special confidence in her assistance", is another reason why "Catholics repeat so often the Hail Mary and Holy Mary". St. Bernard assures us that no one ever invoked the aid of the Blessed Virgin without feeling the effect of her protection. We often repeat the Hail Mary and Holy Mary to show our confidence in her assistance; for we know that through her we shall receive all the assistance which is necessary for us. She is most powerful with God to obtain all that she shall ask of Him. Her Son, who is Almighty, can refuse nothing to the best and most tender of mothers. Being our Mother, she will not deny us her intercession when we have recourse to her. Our miseries move her—our necessities urge her—the prayers we offer she receives.

8. Although the Blessed Virgin extends her goodness to all men, yet she is particularly interested in the salvation of the young. She knows their weakness and the dangers to which they are exposed. Seeing the fury with which the devil assails them,

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the snares which he lays for them, and the efforts which he makes to rob them of their innocence, she protects them in a particular manner whenever they have recourse to her. History is full of examples of saints who have preserved their innocence and virtue in their youth by the assistance of the Queen of Virgins. To mention only one: St. Francis of Sales was in his youth delivered, by the assistance of Mary, from a very dangerous temptation with which he had been long tormented.

9. "To show their special confidence in her assistance, particularly at the hour of death", Catholics repeat the Hail Mary and Holy Mary very often. We pray to Mary to assist us at the hour of death, that great and awful moment. Our whole lives should be a preparation for that tremendous hour, which will decide our eternal lot, and in which the devil will assail us with the utmost effort of his fury. We repeat the "Hail Mary and Holy Mary" that the Blessed Virgin may assist us at that hour, that her Divine Son may visit us, may strengthen us, may support us, and lead us up from this vale of tears to the mansions of glory, where, with her, we shall praise and bless God for ever.†

Q. And why do you always say the Hail Mary after the Lord's Prayer?

A. That by her intercession we may more easily obtain what we ask for in the Lord's Prayer.

10. After having addressed ourselves to God in the "Lord's Prayer", and petitioned Him for grace and mercy, we immediately return to the Blessed Virgin and recite the "Hail Mary". And we always do this, that she may present our prayers to God, intercede with Him, and that "by her

intercession we may more easily obtain what we ask for in the "Lord's Prayer". In the Lord's Prayer we petition God for things conducive to His honour and our salvation. We beg of Him that His name may be known, loved, and revered on earth—that His kingdom may be established in our hearts, and that He may grant us all things necessary for our salvation. Our eternal happiness depends on the success of this prayer. Although we can rely on the goodness of God, and on the promises which He has made of granting us whatever we ask Him in the name of Jesus Christ, the Church tells us to have recourse, at the same time, to Mary, Mother of God.

11. We are, however, far from having more confidence in her than in God, or from imagining her to be more powerful or more merciful than her Son; for this would be blasphemy. But we repose a greater confidence in her prayers than in our own, and believe them to be many degrees better and more acceptable to God than our prayers, as we feel ourselves to be unhappy sinners. This humble sense of our own unworthiness makes us have recourse to her intercession, fearing lest our petitions be rejected on account of our many offences, and because *we do not ask as we ought*, with the proper and necessary dispositions.

12. Have we not every reason to believe and hope that our prayers will be sooner heard when they are backed and supported by her interest, and presented by her unspotted hands, than if we prayed alone ourselves? She is full of charity, full of mercy, full of compassion, full of zeal for our salvation. She knows and sees our infirmities, wants, and necessities. We are certain of her power and of her will to assist us, for the more she is honoured and exalted by her Son, the more powerful and the more efficacious her intercession must be. St. Bernard, and many other great servants of God, tell us, that Mary, as Queen of

Heaven and Mother of God, has been appointed as the dispenser of God's graces, and that all the favours which we receive pass through the hand of this incomparable Virgin. It is then most useful to address our prayers to the Blessed Virgin, "that by her intercession we may more easily obtain what we ask for in the Lord's Prayer".

Q. Is there any particular form of prayer recommended to the faithful in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and to obtain her patronage?

A. Yes; there is one particular prayer, which the faithful are recommended to recite, which is called the "Angelus".

13. Louis XI., king of France, instituted the "Angelus", such as it is now practised among us, in honour of the mystery of the Incarnation, and expressed his desire that besides the evening "Ave Maria", instituted by Pope Innocent XII. and which was said for the general peace of Christian states, a special prayer at noon should be offered for the tranquillity of his kingdom. The "Angelus" is recited in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. In the different Catholic churches the bells ring out at these three periods of the day, to remind the faithful of reciting the "Angelus" or "Ave Maria". It is called the "Angelus" because it is a repetition of the salutation of the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin. Indulgences have been granted to all those who recite the "Angelus" kneeling.

14. That form of Prayer is recommended for these reasons:—1. To consecrate to prayer the beginning, middle, and the end of the day. It is a short aspiration to God, and a passing homage which we pay His Mother. 2. We recite the "Angelus", to give thanks to God, three times every day, for His great mercy in becoming incarnate for us. 3. To remind us to beg of God, that the fruits of His incarnation

may be applied to our souls, and that we may obtain the grace of profiting by it. 4. To recall to our minds the part which the Blessed Virgin had in this great mystery, and to encourage us to invoke her intercession, that we may receive the fruits of the incarnation of the Son of God.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES' PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

* St. Francis de Sales, as we read in his life, experienced the efficacy of the prayer, "Remember, O most pious Virgin". At the age of seventeen he was in Paris, pursuing his studies, and entirely consecrated to the exercises of devotion and to the divine love, which filled his soul with the sweet delights of paradise. To try his fidelity and to unite him more closely to His love, the Lord permitted the devil to represent to him that he was doomed to perdition, and that therefore all his good works were lost. His fears and desolation became so great, that he lost his appetite, his sleep, his colour, the joy of his soul, and became an object of compassion to all who beheld him. During this frightful tempest, the saint could conceive no thought, could utter no words but those of diffidence and sorrow. "Then", he would say, as we read in his life, "shall I be deprived of the grace of God, who has hitherto shown Himself so amiable and so sweet to me?" The temptation lasted a month; but at length the Lord was pleased to deliver him from it by means of most holy Mary, the comfortress of the afflicted, under whose protection the saint had already made a vow of chastity, and in whom, after God, he used to say, he had placed all his hopes. During the temptation, he one evening entered a Church, in which he saw hanging on the wall a tablet, on which he read the following prayer of St. Bernard: "Remember, O most pious Virgin, that it has never been heard that any one who had recourse to thy protection was abandoned". Prostrate before the altar of the Divine Mother, he recited this prayer with tender affection—he renewed his vow of chastity—promised every day to recite the rosary, and then added "My Queen, thou art my advocate with thy Son, to whom I dare not have recourse. My

Mother, if I shall not be permitted to love my Lord in the next world, at least obtain for me the grace to love Him in this life". But scarcely was his prayer finished, when his most sweet Mother delivered him from the temptation. He instantly recovered his inward peace, and with it bodily health, and he afterwards continued to live most devoted to Mary, whose praises and favours he never ceased during his whole life to proclaim in his sermons and writings.—*Life of St. Francis.*

MARY OF EGYPT CONVERTED BY HER PRAYER TO THE
MOTHER OF GOD.

† In the lives of the Saints of the desert, we read that St. Mary of Egypt fled from her relatives, at the age of twelve years, and went to Alexandria, where, by her infamous life, she became the scandal of the city. After a sinful life she wandered into Jerusalem, and there, on the festival of the Holy Cross, she felt herself moved to enter the church, more through curiosity than devotion. But when she was on the point of entering, she was driven back by an invisible hand. She made a second attempt, but she was again repulsed. She endeavoured a third time and a fourth time to enter, but in vain. She retired into a corner of the porch, and there, accidentally raising her eyes, saw a painted image of Mary. Turning towards it, she said, with tears in her eyes: "O Mother of God, look down upon me a poor sinner" I know that in punishment of my sins, I am not worthy of being heard by thee; but thou art the refuge of sinners; for the love of Jesus, obtain for me permission to enter the church. I wish to change my life and to do penance, wheresoever thou wilt direct me". The sinner enters, kneels before the cross, and weeps. She returns to the image, and again prays to Mary, saying: "O Lady! behold me ready: where dost thou wish me to retire in order to do penance?" She heard a voice saying to her: "Go beyond the Jordan, and you will find the place of your repose". She goes to confession, then passes the river, reaches the desert, and learns that this is the place of her penance. She spent fifty-seven years in the desert, and in her eighty-seventh year was found there by the Abbot Zozymus, to whom she gave an account of her entire life, and begged of him to return in the following year, and to bring her the holy Communion. The holy abbot returned, and gave her the Blessed Eucharist. The saint requested him to come again to visit her. Zozymus returned and found her dead, and her body encompassed with light.—*Alban Butler.*

ST. BRIDGET'S REVELATION.

† St. Bridget had a son, who followed the profession of a soldier, and died in the wars. Having news of his death, she was much concerned for the salvation of her son, dying under such dangerous circumstances. As she was often favoured by God with revelations, of which she has composed a book, she was assured of the salvation of her son, by two subsequent revelations. In the first, the Blessed Virgin revealed to her, that she had assisted her son with a particular protection at the hour of death, having strengthened him against temptations, and obtained all necessary graces for him to make a holy and happy end. In the following, she declared the cause of that singular assistance she gave her son, and said, that it was in recompense of the great and sincere devotion he had testified during his life, wherein he had loved her with a very ardent affection, and had endeavoured to please her in all things.—*Revelations of St. Bridget.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why is it we honour and venerate the Saints in Heaven?
2. Why do we honour Mary more than all the other Saints?
3. Why are so many Churches and Altars erected under the invocation of Mary?
4. Do we ever pay Divine honour to the Blessed Virgin?
5. Why is it we repeat so often the Hail Mary and Holy Mary?
6. Do we show our devotion to the Mother of God by saying the "Hail Mary"?
7. How do we show our confidence in the Blessed Virgin, by saying the "Hail Mary"?
8. Is the Blessed Virgin the patroness in particular of young persons?
9. Why do we pray to the Blessed Virgin, to assist us at the hour of death?
10. Why is it that the "Hail Mary" is generally recited after the Lord's Prayer?
11. Why do we have recourse to the Blessed Virgin at all?
12. Why should we have the greatest confidence in the Blessed Virgin?

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13. What do you understand by that form of prayer called the "Angelus"?

14. For what reason is the "Angelus" particularly recommended?

PRACTICE.

1. Be ever a devoted and faithful client of the Blessed Virgin, and always remember that Mary never abandons those who confide in her.

2. Practise every day the recitation of the "Angelus", and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation.

3. When assailed with evil thoughts, fly at once to the patronage of the mother of purity.

PRAYER.

O great Mother of God! I will say to thee, with St. Bernard, "Speak, O Lady! for thy Son hears thee; whatsoever thou wilt ask thou shalt obtain". Thy Son certainly hears thee, and will grant whatever thou wilt ask. We are thy servants—we glory in living under thy protection. O Mother of God! obtain for us a true change of life; obtain for us the love of God, perseverance, and Paradise. We shall ever love thee, pray to thee, and endeavour to follow the example thou hast set us. O Mary! pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

Q. By what other means, besides prayer, can we obtain the grace of God?

A. By the Sacraments, the most powerful of all means.

1. We have already spoken to you, dear children, on prayer, and how necessary it is for us in order to

“obtain the grace of God”. But besides prayer there are other means by which we can obtain that heavenly grace. These means are the Sacraments, which are “the most powerful means” which God has given us to obtain His grace. Prayer obtains grace for us, and the Sacraments confer it. They are so many channels through which the fruits of Jesus Christ’s Passion flow into our souls. It is by means of the Sacraments that we become pleasing to God; it is by means of them that we become every day more perfect; and it is by means of them that we recover God’s grace when, through our fault, it has been lost. Oh! how valuable are these sources of grace and salvation! Yes, they are treasures which contain not gold, nor silver, nor any other perishable goods; but they contain the most valuable goods; they contain the merits of the blood which God has shed for us on the Cross. You see, then, how necessary it is that we should be instructed in everything connected with the Sacraments. If we be ignorant of the Sacraments, we can neither know their value nor receive them with fruit. It is, indeed, to a want of instruction regarding the Sacraments that we are to attribute the little account which Christians make of the grace which they received in Baptism, and the indifference which they manifest when that grace has been lost by sin. We shall now explain what is meant by a Sacrament.*

Q. What is a Sacrament?

A. A visible, that is, an outward sign or action instituted by Christ to give grace.

2. A sacrament is a “visible” or sensible, that is, “an outward sign or action”, which Jesus Christ has instituted to sanctify us, or “give us grace”. **A**

visible or “an outward sign” is something that falls under our senses; something which we can touch, or see, or understand, and which indicates some other thing which we do not see. For example, if we see footsteps imprinted on the earth, we infer that some one has passed that way. If we see smoke, we justly infer that there is fire; for it is a sign of fire. If we see a glass of liquor exposed in a shop, it is a sign that liquor is sold on the premises.

3. In like manner, the Sacraments are sensible or visible signs which represent to us the invisible grace which they contain, and which they communicate to the souls of those who receive them. In Baptism, for example, the water which is poured, and the words which are pronounced: “I baptize thee” . . . sensibly represent the effect of Baptism, which is that of purifying our souls from the stain of sin. But it must be remembered that there is a very wide difference between Sacred signs or the Sacraments, and natural signs, of which we have given a few examples. The natural signs do not contain or communicate what they represent. Smoke does not contain or communicate fire. But the Sacraments not only represent the nature of the graces which we receive, but actually communicate them to our souls. For example, the water of Baptism not only represents the cleansing of the soul, but, together with the words, “I baptize thee”, it actually cleanses the soul, washes it from all stain of sin.

4. In order that the “visible or outward sign or action” should be a Sacrament, it must be “instituted by Christ to give grace”. Christ has instituted the Sacraments, or the visible and outward signs, and that for the purpose of “giving grace”. He instituted some of them before His Passion—others between His resurrection and Ascension. It is by means of these Sacraments that He wished to apply

to our souls the fruit of His sufferings and the price of His death. None but God Himself can communicate His grace to the soul, and therefore the pouring down of grace on the soul, which, properly speaking, is the effect of the Sacraments, is the work of God alone.

5. It is said that a Sacrament has been instituted to "give grace". The Sacraments are the means which God has chosen to sanctify our souls, to give us grace, and all the aids which are necessary to render us pleasing to Him. The Sacraments are the source from which He was pleased that we should imbibe all the graces of which we stand in need. God, it is true, could grant us grace through other means besides the Sacraments if He pleased. Sometimes He does so, as when He pardons the sinner who has perfect Contrition; but this Contrition must include the intention of having recourse to the Sacrament of Penance.

Q. Is grace always given when a Sacrament is properly administered?

A. No; the want of a proper disposition on the part of the receiver, is an obstacle to the reception of grace.

6. Almighty God, having been pleased to ordain these outward forms, to be the instruments or means by which His grace should be brought to our souls, has evidently engaged Himself always to produce the effect whenever the Sacrament of Penance is performed according to His appointment; therefore He will never fail on His part to do so. Yet, though He is prepared to bestow the grace, the grace will not be given, if the receiver be indisposed, and his soul incapable of receiving it, though the outward form be duly administered.†

7. This can be explained by a very homely example, namely, that of writing upon paper. In order

to write, there is required a pen full of ink, a hand to apply it to the paper, and the paper to receive it. Now when the pen full of ink is applied to the paper by a proper hand, and there is no impediment on the paper itself, the writing never fails to be performed. But if the paper should be oiled, and by that means indisposed for receiving the ink, the pen, though full of it, and applied by the most skilful hand to the paper, yet forms not even a single letter; not from any failure on the part of the pen, or of the hand applying it, but because the paper itself is perfectly incapable of receiving the ink upon it.

8. Now the Sacraments are like the pen full of ink; for, being ordained by Jesus Christ as the sacred canals through which His divine grace flows from His blessed wounds to our souls, they contain that grace in great abundance. The person who administers the Sacraments is like the hand which applies the pen to the paper, and the soul of the receiver is like the paper itself. If then the paper be in a proper state, that is, if the soul be well disposed, the sacred canals will never fail to communicate to it such a portion of the grace they contain as the soul is capable of receiving. But if the paper be oiled, that is, if the soul be indisposed, and so incapable of receiving the grace, then the grace cannot be given, because the soul cannot receive it.

Q. Whence have the Sacraments the power of giving grace?

A. From the merits of Christ, which they apply to our souls.

9. "The Sacraments have the power of giving grace", from the merits of Christ. Christ's Passion and Death are applied to us by the Sacraments, to

which God has so annexed justifying grace, that ordinarily He hath not decreed to give and confer it on us, but by the use of them. Now, for example, if there were in a city a great well, whose waters were most wholesome for the health of the body, and were sufficient to quench the thirst of all the citizens, what would that well and waters profit if no man would draw water out of the well? In like manner, the merits of Christ profit not if they be not applied. You see, therefore, it is most necessary to have recourse to the Sacraments, as it is by their means that God applies to us His merits, and by which, as instruments, He confers His grace upon us.

Q. Why are so many ceremonies used in the administration of the Sacraments?

A. To excite devotion and reverence to them, and to signify and explain their effects.

10. The "many ceremonies that are used in the administration of the Sacraments" are intended by the Church "to excite reverence and devotion to them". A rite or ceremony, generally taken, is an outward action or sign used by persons, either for promoting a becoming decency in the necessary intercourse of society, or for bringing to our minds the remembrance of some truth which does not fall under the senses, or for testifying to others the affection of our souls. Thus, in all courts of justice, there are certain outward forms and ceremonies appointed to be observed as necessary for carrying on the business to be done there with regularity and order. In ordinary life itself, the outward actions of bowing or uncovering the head to one another, are ceremonies by which we testify our mutual regard and esteem; and the very rules of good breeding practised in society

are but so many rites and ceremonies, by which we express our respect for one another, excite and improve our mutual kindness, and carry on the intercourse of life with proper decency and decorum. In fact, the ordinary duties of society, whether civil or religious, cannot be discharged without the rules of external rites or ceremonies.

11. A sacred ceremony is an outward action or sign, ordained by the Church of Christ to be used in the external exercise of religion. And "to excite devotion and reverence to them", we use them "in the administration of the Sacraments". It is impossible to perform the outward acts of religion, such as administering the Sacraments, without using some external action in doing so; that is, without using ceremonies. The majesty of God and the sanctity of religion require that the most decent and orderly ceremonies be used in the administration of the Sacraments, in order to excite in the minds of men "devotion and reverence to them"; for experience itself shows how much the sacred ceremonies of religion conduce to this end.

12. Another reason why "so many ceremonies are used in the administration of the Sacraments" is, that they "signify and explain their effects". There are great numbers of people, especially of the lower class, whose understandings are dull and heavy, who are unable to read, and of themselves are incapable of acquiring a knowledge of the nature and properties of the Sacraments. This is at present the case with great multitudes in all countries, but was much more so before the invention of printing, when, perhaps, not one in many thousands knew how to read one letter. On this account it is most necessary to use proper ceremonies, that by seeing them daily performed, the truths represented by them may be the more deeply imprinted on men's minds, and

become familiar to them. The ceremonies "used in the administration of the Sacraments" represent either the dispositions with which we ought to receive them, or the "effects" which they produce on our souls, or the obligations we contract by receiving them; and for this reason it is that the Church uses so many of them when, through her Minister, she confers a Sacrament.

Q. By whom were sacred ceremonies instituted?

A. Sacred ceremonies were instituted by God Himself, and in the New Law, by His Son Jesus Christ and by the Apostles.

13. Sacred ceremonies were instituted by God Himself from the very earliest ages of the world; for we find Cain and Abel—the sons of Adam—employed in offering up sacrifices and gifts to God. Noah did the same after the flood, and so did the Patriarchs after him. Besides, God Almighty, in express terms, instituted the sacred ceremony of Circumcision with Abraham, as a sign of the covenant made with him, and commanded it to be used by all his posterity, under pain of death, as a distinctive mark of the true religion.

14. Sacred ceremonies were, in the second place, instituted by Jesus Christ, and the use of them is highly approved and authorised by His example. In curing the man who had been born blind, "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes; and said to him, Go wash in the pool of Siloe, and he went and washed, and he came seeing"—*John*, xi. 6. Again, in curing the deaf and dumb man: "Taking him aside from the multitude, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue; and looking up to Heaven, he groaned, and said, Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened; and immediately his

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ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right"—*Mark*, vii. 33. Thus, Jesus Christ instituted sacred ceremonies by His command, and authorised them by His example; and the Church, on that account, has retained, and uses several of those very rites here related as done by Him.

15. In the third place, sacred ceremonies were instituted by the Apostles and their successors; for though our blessed Saviour ordained some Himself, and authorized the use of them in general, by His example, yet He left the determination of particular ceremonies to His Apostles and their successors in office—the pastors of the Church. And we find that many of the ceremonies used at Mass, and in administering the Sacraments, were instituted by the Apostles themselves, as they were used universally throughout the whole Church from the very earliest ages, and are attested by the most primitive writers of Christianity to have been received from them. Of this kind are the Sign of the Cross, Holy Water, and the greatest part of the ceremonies of Baptism. We should then pay great respect to sacred ceremonies, both on account of the ends for which they are used, of the sacred truths and holy instructions which they represent, and of the authority by which they are **instituted**.

Q. Who are those who have been appointed by Jesus Christ to administer His Sacraments?

A. The Apostles and their successors, the Bishops and **Priests of the Church**.

16. The Bishops, or first pastors of the Church, are authorised by Christ to administer all the Sacraments. The Priests, who are called the pastors of the second order, are authorised, by their office, to administer all the Sacraments except Confirmation

and Holy Orders. Deacons can administer even solemn Baptism, if they have express permission from the Bishop. All lay persons, both men and women, can, in case of necessity, administer Baptism privately. The ministers of the Sacraments should be in the state of grace, when they are conferring any of them ; and if they be in a state of sin, they would be guilty of a very grievous offence against God by administering them.

17. But it is necessary to remark, that as the efficacy of the Sacraments does not depend on the dignity and merits of the ministers of them, but on the excellency and merits of Christ, it makes no difference in the worthy receiver as to the fruit of the Sacraments, whether they be administered by one in the state of grace, or in the state of sin. Wherefore, as St. Augustin says,* “they are not more true and more holy Sacraments, because they are administered by one that is better, for they of themselves are true and holy ; just as it makes no matter as to the efficacy of the seed and plants, whether or not the seed be sown with clean or foul hands, so that it be good and the earth fruitful”. In like manner, it matters not as to their fruit, whether the Sacraments be administered by a wicked minister, or by one who is pious and good, provided that they be administered duly. On this subject St. Gregory of Nazianzen says : “An iron seal doth as well express the image of a king as a silver or gold one ; so the grace of God is as well imprinted by the Sacraments in the soul of man by an iron minister, as by a gold one”.† And St. Chrysostom justly observes, “that the grace of a sacrament is not hurt by the wickedness of the minister.‡

Q. How many Sacraments are there ?

* Contra Donat., l. 1, c. 4. † In orat. in S. Bap. ‡ Hom. 8.

A. Seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.—*Council of Trent*, ss. 7, c. 1.

18. The Catholic Church has always acknowledged seven Sacraments, and has always administered them; and the Council of Trent has in express terms defined that the number of Sacraments is seven. If it be asked, why there is neither more nor less—why they are not six or eight, and not seven, the answer is, that the necessities of man's spiritual life on earth would seem to require seven Sacraments, rather than any other number. In order to exist, to preserve existence, and to contribute to his own and the public good, seven things seem necessary to man: to be born, to grow, to be nurtured, to be cured when sick, when weak to be strengthened; as far as regards the public weal, to have magistrates invested with authority to govern him; and finally to perpetuate himself and his species by legitimate offspring. Bearing a likeness, then, as all these things clearly do, to that life by which the soul lives to God, we discover in them a reason to account for the number of the Sacraments.

19. Amongst them, the first is "Baptism", the gate, as it were, of all the rest. When we came into the world spiritually dead, we required a new birth; but by Baptism we are born again to Christ. It is not enough to be born: we must grow up and be strengthened in a new life; and "Confirmation" it is which gives to our souls that growth and strength. To preserve life in the soul, as well as in the body, we require food; but the blessed "Eucharist", the true bread from Heaven, nourishes our souls to eternal life, according to these words of our Saviour: "My flesh is meat, indeed, and my blood is drink indeed"—*John*, vi. 35. Spiritual life has

its infirmities and maladies; but "Penance" cures them, and restores spiritual health to the soul.†

20. In our last moments, when at the gate of death, we require light and strength; and "Extreme Unction" removes the traces of sin, and strengthens the soul in our last moments, of which St. James says: "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him"—*St. James*, v. 15. Christian society, like every other society, requires rulers who may govern it, and pastors who may instruct it; and "Holy Orders" gives power to perpetuate in the Church rulers and pastors to govern it. The seventh Sacrament is "Matrimony", which sanctifies the conjugal union of man and woman, and gives grace to parents to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. You see, then, dear children, how wisely and liberally Jesus Christ has provided for all the necessities of our souls. What gratitude and love do we not owe our divine Redeemer for His great mercy and love! and oh, how we shall be without excuse, if, with so many means of salvation, our souls be eternally lost!

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE SACRAMENTS OUR SUPPORT AND CONSOLATION.

* Heaven-framed law! What a splendid provision does religion make for us against the decay of perishable humanity! As the golden dawn of spring awakes nature into life and beauty, it calls the soul into a new and glorious existence. God of grace! be ever blessed for this eternal gift. And it is even framed to meet all man's necessities in every stage of this life: when we come into this life, covered with the guilt of original sin, religion meets us on the boundaries of this life to welcome our arrival, and, taking us in her arms, washes us in the waters of Baptism, and makes us children of God and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven. Again, when

we advance farther, and when we are about to mix in the world, religion sees the dangers to which the young heart is exposed; and hence she meets us with an additional help, and supplies us with the sacrament of Confirmation, to strengthen us against all the temptations of the deceitful world we are about to enter. When we advance still farther, and when through human frailty we fall into mortal sin, religion does not abandon us: she follows us weeping like a fond parent, and moving us to sorrow; she gives the sacrament of Penance to blot out our sins and restore us to God's friendship. Thus, as we travel through this world, the Sacraments are placed like fountains at regular distances on the road to refresh us. And lest at any time the wearied traveller should faint through weakness on the journey, the bread of life is always ready in the sacrament of the Eucharist, to feed and nourish the soul. When the evening of life approaches, and our lengthening shadows remind us of the decline of our days, religion comes to support our tottering steps, soothes our declining years, stands by our pillow, consoles our last moments, when all the world leaves us, with Extreme Unction—the holy ointment of the Lord strengthens us in the agony of death, and accompanies us to the very brink of the grave.—*Dr. Cahill.*

NEGLECT OF SACRAMENTS.

† A certain holy and zealous priest, addressing his people, said to them: "How many sick persons repair in the summer season to Louchon, Vichy, Biarritz, and other celebrated watering-places, at very great expense, in order to obtain the cure of some corporal disease!" In the Sacraments we have admirable sources for all the ills of the soul; and these sources of grace invariably cure all those who, with proper dispositions, have recourse to them. And yet how many spiritually sick amongst us, who do not avail themselves of those admirable waters, flowing through the Sacraments out of the Saviour's fountains, for the cure of all the maladies of the soul!"

THE FLAGELLANTES.

‡ About the end of the thirteenth century there arose in Germany a sect of fanatical heretics called Flagellantes, who placed Penance entirely in the scourging of the body, or flagellation, teaching that it supplied the salutary purposes of the Sacraments. They were condemned by Pope Clement VI.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are the Sacraments powerful means by which to obtain grace?
2. What do you mean by a visible or outward sign?
3. How do you prove that the Sacraments are outward signs of grace?
4. Who is it that has instituted the Sacraments?
5. Are the Sacraments sources of grace?
6. To obtain grace, should the Sacraments be received worthily?
7. Can you explain this by a familiar example?
8. How do you apply the illustrations of pen, ink, and paper, to the Sacraments?
9. Whence have the Sacraments their efficacy in giving grace?
10. What do you understand by rites or ceremonies?
11. Why do we use ceremonies in the administration of Sacraments?
12. Do ceremonies explain the effects of the Sacraments?
13. By whom were religious rites first instituted?
14. Did Jesus Christ institute and practise religious rites and ceremonies?
15. Did the Apostles establish any religious rites or ceremonies?
16. Who are appointed the ministers of the Sacraments?
17. Do the Sacraments produce their effects, though dispensed by an unworthy minister?
18. Why is it that there are Seven Sacraments, and neither more nor less?
19. By what means are we born in Christ, and strengthened in the grace of God?
20. What are the effects of the three last Sacraments?

PRACTICE.

1. Often reflect on the importance of the Sacraments, and how necessary they are for salvation.
2. Be filled with gratitude to God for His goodness in the institution of the Sacraments.
3. Entertain the greatest horror of the sin of sacrilege, and resolve to receive the Sacraments with the necessary dispositions.

PRAYER.

O my God! we have just been taught the nature of the

Sacraments, their number, and the graces communicated by them; we give Thee thanks for the institution of them, and promise faithfully never to profane them by receiving them unworthily. Grant us, dear Jesus! that we may always receive the Sacraments with faith, fervour, and love, so that by their means we may acquire eternal life. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

ON BAPTISM.

Q. What is Baptism?

A. A Sacrament which cleanses us from Original sin, and makes us Christians and children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven.

1. "Baptism is a Sacrament", and the first and most necessary of all the Sacraments; because until we shall have received it we are incapable of receiving any other Sacrament. The word baptism signifies *washing, cleansing*; to baptize means to *wash, to cleanse, or purify* with water. Baptism is a Sacrament, for it is a visible sign instituted by Jesus Christ to give grace. In Baptism there is a sensible sign; for the water which is poured, and the words which are pronounced when Baptism is being given, point out that the soul is purified from sin. This outward sign has been instituted by Jesus Christ; for He said to His disciples: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—*Matt.*, xxviii. 19. And that this outward sign was instituted by Him to give grace, He tells us in these words: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved"—*Mark*, xvi. 16. On another occasion He said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy

Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"—*John*, iii. 5. None but Christ could institute Baptism; for He alone, as the Lord of nature and grace, is able to produce supernatural effects from material things.

2. "Baptism is a Sacrament which cleanses us from Original sin". We all, dear children, have been born in Original sin—a sin inherited by us from our first parents. Not only when we are born, but the very moment we are conceived in our mother's womb, we become sullied and infected by that sin; and whilst Original sin remains in the soul, we could not be pleasing to God, for by it we become "children of wrath". If we died in Original sin, we never could enter Heaven. Where, then, is the remedy for this sin? The remedy is "Baptism"; for when we are baptized, this "Original sin" is altogether blotted out and washed away—we are no longer "children of wrath", but become at once friends and "children of God". And the reason is, because all being born in Original sin, there is no remission nor remedy for that sin but through the blood of Christ, which cannot be applied to our souls without Baptism—the first Sacrament we receive.

3. When you were taken to the church, a day or two after you had been brought into the world, you were then stained with Original sin; but the stain was removed at the moment you were baptized. The Priest who baptized you, spoke in a tone of command to the devil who possessed your souls, saying: "Depart, thou filthy spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost". Then he poured three times, in the form of a cross, water on your head, and at that very moment the Original sin in which you were born was blotted out, and the Holy Ghost descended into your souls to dwell and remain with you.

4. Baptism not only "cleanses us from "Original

sin", but also "makes us Christians and children of God". Before we were baptized we had been children of wrath; for Original sin, in which we were born, rendered us, in the eyes of God, objects of malediction. We belonged to the devil, we were subject to his hateful sway, and we had nothing to expect after this life except eternal torments. But what a change have we undergone by means of Baptism! Baptism rescued us from the slavery of the devil; the links by which we were bound to him were broken, and the stain which we contracted, as children of a rebellious parent, was immediately washed away. The very moment in which we were baptized, the Father of Heaven looked down on us with a loving eye, and we became "Christians and children of God", objects of His tenderness and love.

5. By means of Baptism it is that we cease to be infidels, and that we enter the great family of "Christians", of which Jesus Christ is the invisible Head, and the Pope the visible Head. By Baptism we become members of the Church, and so have a right to participate in its spiritual goods—its Sacraments and prayers. On the contrary, those who have not been baptized are not "Christians", and cannot have any part in the spiritual goods of the Church, nor can they validly receive any of the other Sacraments. By Baptism we are made "Children of God"; for no sooner are we baptized than we become His children, and He becomes "our Father". Jesus Christ Himself tells us to call God by that endearing name: "When you pray", He tells us in the Gospel, "you shall say: Our Father who art in Heaven". Jesus Christ alone is the son of God by nature; but we are sons and children of God by adoption.*

6. Baptism also makes us "heirs of the kingdom of Heaven"; for instantly we are baptized, we become the brethren and co-heirs of Jesus Christ; and being

the co-heirs of Jesus Christ, we acquire a title to eternal happiness, are made "heirs of the kingdom of Heaven", and are called to reign for ever in that glorious mansion of the Blessed, and to take part of the throne and glories of our Father. We have a right, then, to call God our Father, and to regard Heaven as our inheritance. What thanks should we not give our divine Lord for the institution of the Sacrament of Baptism, which gives us a new life, by "cleansing us from Original sin, and making us Christians and children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven!"

Q. Does Baptism also remit the actual sins committed before it?

A. Yes, and all the punishment due to them.

7. Jesus Christ instituted Baptism in particular to blot out Original sin; but this Sacrament "also remits the actual sins committed before it". So that if a person forty or sixty years old, for example, and who, from the time he had come to the use of reason, had daily committed grievous offences against God, were to receive Baptism with the necessary dispositions, he would obtain remission not only of Original sin, but also remission of "all the actual sins" committed during the course of his long life.

8. That Baptism cleanses us not only from Original sin, but also "remits all the actual sins committed before it", can be proved from the strong and plain testimony of Scripture. St. Paul, writing to Titus on this subject, speaks thus: "We ourselves, also, were some time unwise, incredulous, erring slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared,

not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the *laver of regeneration*, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting"—*Titus*, iii. 3, 7. In this beautiful passage, the Apostle first acknowledges his former sins, then declares that the kindness he received from God, in delivering him from them, was not owing to his own merits, but to the free mercy of God; that the means by which he was saved from them was the "laver or washing of regeneration"—the Sacrament of Baptism, by which he was renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, through the merits of Christ; and that by the grace received in this laver of regeneration, he was "justified" and made an heir, "according to the hope of life everlasting". At St. Peter's first sermon, when the Jews asked him what they must do, he made answer. "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins"—*Acts*, ii. 38. When Ananias came to St. Paul after his conversion, he said to him: "Rise up and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"—*Acts*, xxii. 16. These texts, and many others in reference to the same subject, prove that "all the actual sins committed" before Baptism are remitted by means of the Sacrament, when received with the necessary dispositions.

9. That an adult, or one who has arrived at the age of reason, should receive pardon of his sins by Baptism, it is necessary that he should receive it with faith, hope, and a true sorrow for sin. If these dispositions be wanting, he receives, it is true, the character of a Christian; but the other effects of the Sacrament, as the infusion of sanctifying grace, the

remission of Original sin, and of all actual sins, are suspended, and will remain so, until the obstacle making void these effects be removed by true repentance.

10. Not only are the “actual sins committed” before Baptism remitted by that Sacrament, but even “all the punishment due to them, whether in this world or the world to come”. And the reason is, that as Baptism is the first door by which we enter into the fold of Jesus Christ, the merits of His death are, by that Sacrament, applied to our souls in so superabundant a manner as fully to satisfy the justice of God for all demands against us, whether for Original or actual sin ; and, therefore, God grants us by it, a full and perfect remission of all our past sins and of “all the punishment due to them”. So that though a person had been guilty of the most enormous sins, yet if, upon his sincere repentance, he receives the grace of Baptism, and should die in that happy state, his soul would go straight to Heaven—like the soul of a child who dies after having been baptized ; because there is nothing to hinder its entrance into that seat of bliss and happiness. And this is the reason why, when grown up persons are baptized, no penitential works are imposed on them.†

Q. Does Baptism free us from the weakness of our nature, such as concupiscence, ignorance, inclinations to evil, occasioned by original sin ?

A. No : Baptism frees us not from the infirmities and evil propensities of our nature.

11. Ignorance, concupiscence, the infirmities of body and soul, our mortal state are the necessary effects of Original sin, more than a punishment inflicted for it ; and God is pleased not to take them away by the grace of Baptism, but leaves human nature subject to them. And this he does, to humble

our pride—to detach our hearts from this world, and make us look upon it as a place of punishment—to make us long after Heaven, where alone we shall be delivered from all our miseries—to make us live in fear and trembling; for our infirmities serve much to exercise us in virtue.

Q. Is Baptism necessary to salvation?

A. Yes: for without it, “we cannot enter the kingdom of God”—*John*, iii. 5.

12. Baptism is certainly “necessary for salvation”, and the most necessary of all the Sacraments, because without it we are incapable of receiving any other Sacrament, as it is the door or gate of all the rest, and the entrance to them; and because, not only grown up persons, but even children cannot, without receiving it, be saved and delivered from that damnation which Original sin entailed on all men. If we look over the Scriptures we shall find that none can enter the kingdom of Heaven without Baptism. Our Saviour in his conversation with Nicodemus, declares that, “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”. And when Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born again?” Christ then answers him, and explains how this new birth is bestowed upon us: “Verily, verily, I say to thee, except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”—*John*, iii. 3, 5. As if He had said: I speak not, O Nicodemus! of a corporal nativity, by which a man must come again from his mother’s womb, for this cannot be done; but I speak of a spiritual nativity, by which a man is born again of water in Baptism and the Holy Ghost. Unless, then, a man be re-born by this nativity, which is

made by water and the Holy Ghost, "he cannot enter the kingdom of God".

13. Again, when our Saviour gave His Apostles their commission to teach and baptize all nations, He immediately adds. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned"—*Mark*, xvi. 16. In these words we clearly see that our Saviour here, with the same breath, commands the Apostles to teach and to baptize all nations; consequently, He requires that all nations should believe the truths taught by the Apostles, and should also be *baptized*. And in this passage we must, too, remark, that salvation is promised not to Faith alone, but to Faith and *Baptism* together, which evidently proves the necessity of one as well as the other. St. Paul, on his conversion, had true faith in Jesus Christ, continued three days doing penance in praying and fasting, and yet after all this, when Ananias came to him, he said: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sin"—*Acts*, xxii. 16. In these words addressed to St. Paul, we see the absolute necessity of Baptism for our justification and that neither faith, nor repentance, nor prayer, nor fasting will be of any avail without it, when it can be had. †

Q. Can a person, in any case, be saved without Baptism?

A. A person full grown can be saved, in certain circumstances, without actual baptism, if he has a desire of receiving it.

14. There are two cases in which a person may be justified and saved without *actually* receiving the Sacrament of Baptism. The first is that of an infidel who had embraced the true faith, but cannot get himself baptized, although he earnestly desires it. The second case is that of a person suffering martyrdom for the faith before he has been able to receive

Baptism. In the first case, salvation can be had if there be a true and real sorrow for sins, founded on the love of God, for so the words of Christ ought to be understood, when He says: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost". In the second case salvation can be had; for martyrdom supplies the want of actual Baptism, as our Saviour assures us that any one who shall confess Him before men, He shall confess him before His Father who is in Heaven. * He who dies for Jesus Christ is *baptized in his own blood*, obtains a full remission of all his sins, and enters immediately the dwelling of God. St. Genesius, of Arles, is honoured as a Saint, because, on account of his refusal to subscribe to a persecuting edict of Maximilian, he was put to death, though at that time he had not been baptized.

Q. What is the fate of young children who die without baptism?

A. They shall never see God; but we are allowed to think that they will not be condemned to the fire of hell.

15. If a young child were put to death for the sake of Christ, that would be to it a *baptism of blood*, and open to it Heaven. Except in this case—infants being incapable of desiring Baptism—if children are not actually baptized with water, they cannot go to Heaven, for our Saviour's words are clear and express on this point. As for what becomes of such children not baptized, divines are divided in their opinion about it—some saying one thing, some another. A great many learned theologians assert, that in hell there is a particular place called limbo, where children go who die without being baptized, and where, though deprived of eternal beatitude, they are not condemned to suffer the torments of hell-fire.*

* See vol. 1, chap. xvii.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS.

Clovis, the greatest conqueror of his age, and justly styled the founder of the French monarchy, married St. Clotildis in 493. The first fruit of their marriage was a son, who, by the mother's influence, was baptized and called Ingomer. This child died still wearing the white dress, within the first week after his Baptism. Clovis severely reproached Clotildis, and said: "If he had been consecrated in the name of my gods, he had not died, but having been baptized in the name of yours, he could not live". The queen answered. "I thank God who has thought me worthy of bearing a child whom He has called to His kingdom". She had afterwards another son, who was also baptized, and was named Chlodomer. He too fell sick, and the king said, in great anger: "It could not be otherwise: he will die presently in the same manner his brother died, having been baptized in the name of your Christ". God was pleased to put the good queen to this trial; but by her prayers the child recovered. She never ceased to exhort the king to forsake his idols and to acknowledge the true God; but he held out a long time against all her arguments, till on the following occasion God was pleased wonderfully to bring him to the confession of His holy name. In an engagement with the Suevi and Alemanni, which was one of the fiercest battles recorded in history, the king had given the command of his infantry to his cousin, Sigebert, he himself fighting at the head of his cavalry. The shock of the enemy was so terrible, that Sigebert was, in a short time, carried wounded out of the field, and the infantry were entirely routed and put to flight. Notwithstanding the lion-like courage of Clovis, his forces were at length borne down, and began to flee and disperse themselves in every direction. Every effort was made to rally them, but in vain. Clotildis had said to him when leaving, "My lord, you are going to conquest, but in order to be victorious, invoke the God of the Christians; He is the sole Lord of the universe, and is styled the God of armies. If you address yourself to Him, though your enemies were a hundred against one you would triumph over them". The king called to mind these her words in his present extremity, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, with tears: "O Christ, whom Clotildis invokes as the Son of the living God, I implore Thy succour. I have called upon my gods, and find

they have no power, I therefore invoke Thee, I believe in Thee; deliver me from my enemies and I will be baptized in Thy name". No sooner had he made this prayer, than his scattered cavalry began to rally about his person. The battle was renewed with fresh vigour, and the chief king and generalissimo of the enemy being slain, the whole army threw down their arms and begged for quarter. Clovis, from that memorable day, thought of nothing but preparing himself for the holy Sacrament of Baptism. So impatient was he to fulfil his vow of becoming a Christian, that the least wiiful delay appeared to him criminal. The queen, upon hearing this news, went herself to meet the king in Champagne. Clovis no sooner saw her, than he cried out to her "Clovis has vanquished the Alemanni, and you have triumphed over Clovis. The business you have so much at heart is done; my Baptism can no longer be delayed." St. Remigius prepared him for it by the usual practices of fasting, penance, and prayer. To give an external pomp to this sacred action, the good queen took care that the streets from the palace to the great church should be adorned with flowers and evergreens, and that the church and baptistry should be lighted up with a great number of perfumed wax tapers, scented with exquisite odours. The catechumens marched in procession, bearing crosses and singing the litany. St. Remigius conducted the king by the hand, followed by the queen and the people. Coming near the holy font, the bishop said to him: "Bow down your neck with meekness, great Sicambrian prince! adore what you have hitherto burned, and burn what you have hitherto adored". The king was baptized by St. Remigius on Christmas Day.—*Alban Butler.*

LOUIS XV. AND HIS CHILDREN.

† Religion makes no distinction between the rich and the poor; cleansed and regenerated by the same sacrament, they have an equal right to the same favours, and he who is most faithful to his baptismal engagements, is the greatest in the eyes of God. This is the lesson which the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI., one day inculcated on his children. Two of his sons had received only private baptism at the time of their birth. At the age of seven or eight the sacred ceremonies were supplied. The prince, their father, called for the baptismal parochial registry in which their names were inserted. On opening the register, he pointed out to them the name which immediately preceded theirs—it was the son of a very poor man. "You see, children" remarked the

father, "in the eyes of God all ranks and conditions are equal. He allows no distinction except that made by religion and virtue. One day you will be distinguished and powerful in the eyes of the world, and this boy will not even be known; but if he prove more virtuous than you, he will be greater and more illustrious in the eyes of God".

THE CHARITABLE CHRISTIAN.

† "I have known a virtuous woman", says the pious Boudon, "poor indeed as to the goods of this world, but very rich as to those of Heaven; full of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and affectionately devoted to the Blessed Virgin. In the town in which she lived, a magnificent church was being erected, and she felt strongly impelled to offer a crown piece, which she had saved out of her hard earnings, that she might have the gratification of contributing to the construction of the sacred edifice. The priest to whom she presented her offering refused to accept it, and told her that he would be better pleased to give her some assistance than to take anything from her, judging, from her appearance, that she must be wretchedly poor. But she, with admirable faith, replied: 'Poor, do you say, reverend father? Ah! am I not a Christian—the daughter of a great king, and heiress to an everlasting kingdom?'"

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How do you show that Baptism is a Sacrament?
2. Does Baptism cleanse us from original sin?
3. When is original sin blotted out from our souls?
4. What were we before Baptism, and what after it?
5. Are we made Christians and children of God by Baptism?
6. Do we become heirs of Heaven, when we receive Baptism?
7. Are the sins committed before Baptism remitted by that Sacrament?
8. Can you prove from Scripture that Baptism remits all the sins committed before it?
9. Is Original sin remitted to an adult, who receives Baptism without the due dispositions?
10. Is the punishment due to sin remitted by Baptism?
11. Does Baptism remove with Original sin the weakness of our nature?

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12. Why is it that Baptism is the most necessary of all the Sacraments?

13. Can you prove the necessity of Baptism from the commission of Christ to His Apostles?

14. Can one be saved in any case without actual Baptism?

15. What is the fate of a child who dies without being baptized?

PRACTICE.

1. Always live in accordance with the dignity of a Christian, and ever conform to the obligations it imposes.

2. Frequently give thanks to God for having called you to Christianity, and for having made you His children and children of the Church?

3. Pray earnestly to Him, to grant you the grace of always supporting the character of a Christian, by performing well its duties.

PRAYER.

O my God! we return Thee thanks for the instructions we have received. We have now been taught what Baptism is, and the great happiness of receiving that most necessary Sacrament. Alas! we have but too often lost sight of the character with which we were stamped when we were washed in the healing waters of Baptism; but evermore, dear Lord, we shall atone for our past forgetfulness, and perform all our actions as becomes Christians and children of God. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE MINISTER AND CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM.

Q. Who are appointed by Christ to give Baptism?

A. The pastors of His Church, but in case of necessity, any lay man or woman can give it.

1. Since Baptism is so necessary for salvation, Jesus Christ, in instituting it, has given to men every facility for receiving it. Christ has appointed the

“pastors of His Church”, that is, the Bishops and Priests, the *ordinary* ministers of this Sacrament; and to them alone belongs the right of administering it *solemnly*, that is, with the ceremonies which accompany it, such as the exorcisms, the anointing with sacred oil, the attendance of godfather and god-mother. A deacon with the express permission of the Bishop, can administer Baptism solemnly.

2. Although the “pastors of the Church” are the ordinary ministers of Baptism appointed by our Lord, yet “in case of necessity, any lay man or woman can give it”. It can be administered in case of necessity, by any person, lay or clerical, man or woman, Christian or infidel, provided the person has the intention of doing what the Church does, and observes what is necessary for the valid administration of it. Although in case of necessity “any lay man or woman can give it”, whether he or she be Christian or infidel, yet a Catholic should be selected before a heretic, and a man before a woman. Except in a case of necessity, a lay person should never administer Baptism; for in usurping a function which does not belong to him, he would become guilty of a serious offence. However, Baptism given by him is valid, and on that account should not be renewed.

Q. How is Baptism given?

A. By pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized, saying at the same time: “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”—*Matt.*, xxviii. 19.

3. As no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven without actual Baptism, or having a desire of it, or having been baptized in his own blood by martyrdom it is a matter of the greatest importance for all per-

sons, and particularly for married women, to learn and know well all that is necessary and essential to the validity of this Sacrament. Parents and guardians ought likewise take great care that their children and servants know well how to baptize a child, in case of necessity, that the infant may not be lost through their ignorance of giving Baptism.

4. Baptism is given "by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized". In order to baptize a child, you must take water, not rose water, nor any sort of artificial water, but natural water—that is to say, water of the fountain, well, river, pit, pond, sea, or rain. Having taken the vessel of water in your right hand, you should wet or wash the body of the infant with it, by pouring it on the head if you possibly can; but if you cannot wash the head, you should pour water upon the breast, arm, foot, or upon some other naked part of the body; and whilst you are pouring water on the head, or any other part of the infant's body, you are at the same time to say distinctly—having the intention to baptize—"I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". It may be necessary to remark that the person who pours the water should also be the person to pronounce the words or form of Baptism; for if one pours the water, and another person pronounce the words, Baptism would not be given.

5. When there is some doubt as to the child being alive, or when one is not certain that the child is dead, Baptism should be given conditionally by saying: "If thou art living, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; for it is better to put yourself in danger of baptizing a dead child, than not to baptize one living. As the life of these little creatures is sometimes so imperceptible, that we think them dead when they

are not so, but some time after will give signs of life, it is on that account necessary that all persons, and especially women, should know how to give Baptism. For if, after its birth, the infant be so weak that, to all appearance, it will die before a Priest—the ordinary minister—can be had; and if those in the house know not how to baptize, the infant, for want of that knowledge, may be deprived of the kingdom of Heaven.

Q. If the words or form of Baptism be not said properly, would Baptism be given?

A. No; the words must be properly said, otherwise the Baptism will not be given.

6. That a person may be really baptized, and Baptism be validly administered, it is absolutely necessary that the words constituting the form of Baptism should be accurately repeated whilst the water is being poured on the head of the person to be baptized. If even a single word of the form be omitted, no Baptism is given. If you say: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost", and omit the words, "I baptize thee", there is no Baptism given"; or if you should say: "I baptize thee in the name of the Blessed Trinity", or "I baptize thee in the name of the Son and Holy Ghost", Baptism would not be given: because, for the validity of the sacrament, it is essentially necessary to express the action of the minister, the person that is to be baptized, and the distinct invocation of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, in whose name it should be administered, according to the express command of Jesus Christ, who said: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost".

7. There are many reasons why Christ would have the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity

named in the form of Baptism; but the principal reasons are, in order to declare whence Baptism has its virtue or force, which is from the Father, who sent His Son; from the Son, who instituted Baptism, and by His blood gave it virtue to blot out sin; from the Holy Ghost, who should inwardly purge and sanctify the soul. Every one ought, therefore, to take great care that the form of Baptism be not violated when administering so important and necessary a sacrament.

Q. Is the administration of Baptism accompanied with any religious ceremonies?

A. Yes; Baptism, when given by the ordinary minister of that sacrament, is accompanied with the most solemn and edifying ceremonies.

8. As the ceremonies which are used in Baptism are as so many lessons, informing us of the effects of grace obtained by this sacrament, as also to show us what the obligations are which we contract by its reception, it would be well, dear children, that you should be informed of the nature and meaning of the ceremonies which are performed during the administration of the sacrament of Baptism.

9. The water which is used in Baptism is solemnly consecrated on Easter Saturday; and for this reason, that Christians might understand that the virtue and effects of Baptism proceed from the merits of the death and passion of Christ, and not from any natural virtue inherent in the water.

10. When the child is presented for Baptism, he is brought to the church door, but must not enter; and that is to signify that as he is not yet of the number of the faithful, he has no right to enter into that sacred place. Having arrived at the door or porch of the church, the Priest meets him there, having first put on his stole and surplice, and having

asked the child what he demands from the Church, and then telling him the conditions on which the demand will be granted, he proceeds to prepare him for receiving the Sacrament.

11. In the first place, he breathes upon him, and rebukes the evil spirit, saying: "Depart from him, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost". This ceremony is taken from the example of Christ Himself, who, when He was about to communicate the Holy Ghost to His Apostles, breathed on them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"—*John*, xx. 22. St. Ambrose makes mention of this ceremony nearly fourteen hundred years ago: "When a Priest", says he, "goes to baptize, he first begins with exorcisms". This ceremony of breathing signifies, that by Baptism we receive a new and spiritual life by grace, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, who is given to us and makes us His temples.

12. After this, the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross on the child: first on the forehead, the seat of bashfulness, to give you to understand that you ought never be ashamed of the cross of Christ; then on the breast, that you may know that you should always have Christ crucified in your hearts. This ceremony St. Augustin makes mention of when speaking to a catechumen before Baptism: "You are to be signed this day on your forehead with the Sign of the Cross, that hereafter the devil may be afraid to touch you, as being marked with this saving sign". This ceremony being over, salt is put into the mouth of the child, to signify that all his words and works ought to be seasoned with prudence and wisdom, of which salt is an emblem, as it seasons and gives a relish to whatever it is applied to.

13. The Priest then proceeds to the exorcisms, by which, in the name of Jesus Christ, and through the merits of His death upon the Cross—the Sign of

which is frequently made upon the person to be baptized—he commands the devil to depart from the child, whom God has chosen to be admitted to the grace of Baptism, and orders him to give place to the Holy Ghost, who comes to take possession of the child, and to make him His temple.

14. The child to be baptized being thus prepared to be admitted into the Church, the Priest introduces him into that part of it where the Baptismal font is placed, saying: “Enter into the Church of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ unto everlasting life”. And while they are proceeding to the font, the Priest and the godfather and godmother of the child recite, in an audible voice, the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, to show that it is only by true faith in Jesus Christ that we are entitled to enter into His Church and become members of His body.

15. Then the Priest recites another exorcism, and at the end of it, touches the ears and nostrils of the child to be baptized, with a little spittle, saying: “Ephpheta, that is, be thou opened into an odour of sweetness; but, be thou put to flight, O devil, for the judgment of God is at hand”. This ceremony is taken from the example of Jesus Christ, who, when they had brought Him one who had been deaf and dumb, as we read in the Gospel, put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, touched his tongue, saying to him: “Ephpheta, that is, be thou opened; and immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right”. This ceremony signifies that, as Jesus Christ cured the deaf and dumb man by touching his ears and applying spittle to his tongue, so by the grace of Baptism the ears of our soul are opened to hear the word of God and receive the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What are the ceremonies that are immediately connected with Baptism?

A. The renunciation of the devil, and the unction of the breast and shoulders.

16. As Baptism is a covenant between God and the soul, there are two conditions necessarily required on our part to prepare us for receiving it; and these conditions are, to renounce for ever the devil and the world, and to adhere to Jesus Christ by faith. Accordingly, when the Priest and child to be baptized have arrived at the Sacred font, the Priest asks the godfather and godmother, in the name of the child, whether he renounces the devil: "Do you renounce the devil and all his works and pomps?" And the godfather and godmother, in his name, answer: "I renounce them". This is the sacred obligation which we contract in Baptism—this is the solemn promise we make, upon the keeping of which our eternal salvation depends.

17. The ceremony immediately succeeding the promise made, in the name of the infant, by the godfather and godmother, of renouncing the devil, is the anointing the infant with holy oil on the breast and shoulders. The anointing of the breast is to signify that the grace of Baptism will fortify the heart with heavenly courage to act manfully and resolutely in all things; and the anointing between the shoulders, to show that the grace of Baptism will sweeten the yoke of Christ, and make the burden of His commands light and pleasing.

18. The Priest then interrogates the child to be baptized concerning his faith in the Blessed Trinity, and in the Incarnation and death of our Saviour: "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty? and in Jesus Christ, His only Son? and in the Holy Ghost?" These questions are proposed to show that faith is a disposition necessarily required before Baptism; and as children cannot actually have it themselves, their godfathers and godmothers answer for

them ; and hence they contract an obligation of seeing that they are instructed in the faith, when they come to an age capable of instruction. The Priest then inquires if the child be willing to be baptized : " Wilt thou be baptized ?" and being answered in the affirmative by the godfather and godmother—" I will"—he immediately baptizes him, by administering the Sacrament in the manner before explained.

Q. What are the ceremonies used after Baptism ?

A. The child baptized is anointed with Holy chrism, a white cloth is placed on his head, and a lighted candle in his hand.

19. The new Christian is now anointed on the top of his head with Holy chrism, and that is to show that he is now a member of Christ and consecrated to Him for evermore. A white cloth is then placed on his head, indicating the spotless innocence with which his soul is adorned ; and the Priest, when laying it on him, prays that he may carry it unstained before the judgment seat of Christ. Lastly, a lighted candle is then put into the sponsors' hands, and that signifies the light of good example which the child, when come to the use of reason, will be obliged to give during life by obeying the commands of God ; and whilst the Priest is giving the candle, he exhorts him to keep his Baptism without reproof, by attending to the precepts of God. Then the ceremony concludes with those words, addressed to the child : " Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee".

20. During the performance of the ceremonies preceeding the administration of Baptism, the Priest wears a purple stole ; for as Original sin is not yet effaced, and the child still remains under the slavery of the devil, it would not be meet to use any other colour except that denoting mourning and sorrow. But when the Priest has arrived at the font, and is

about to baptize the child, he removes the purple stole—a sign of joy—to make known that Original sin is immediately to be blotted out, and the stain removed through the merits of Christ.

Q. What do we promise in Baptism?

A. To renounce the devil with all his works and pomps.

21. We promised, dear children, in Baptism (for our godfathers and godmothers answered in our names) to renounce the “devil with all his works and pomps”, and that promise we should always perform. The promise of “renouncing the devil”, or Satan, is that of renouncing for ever the ways of the devil—is a public avowal that we shall have no part with him—that we shall abandon for ever his service to follow that of Jesus Christ, and walk in the way of holiness and justice, traced out for us by the Man-God. “To renounce all his works”, is to renounce every thought, every word, every action, every omission which is displeasing to our Lord, and forbidden by His commandments and by those of His Church. Sins are called the “works of the devil”, because the devil has been the first sinner, for he it was who first rebelled against God, and because it is he who every day and moment is leading us into sin, and prompting us to trample under foot the laws of the Gospel. To “renounce the pomps of the devil”, is to renounce the maxims and vanities of this wicked world, the rules and principles by which worldly persons are governed, and which are entirely opposed to the rules and conduct traced out for us in the word of God.

22. To renounce the “devil, with all his works and pomps”, we solemnly promised in Baptism. Now, dear children, have we fulfilled that promise? have we hitherto renounced the devil with all his works and

pomps ? We made that solemn promise, or at least it was made in our names, when we were baptized. At that time a solemn engagement had been entered into between God and ourselves—a contract the most solemn that could take place. That contract was signed by the blood of Jesus Christ, it was made in the presence of the Angels of the Lord, in presence of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in the face of Heaven. The priest, our godfathers and our godmothers, and those assisting, were so many witnesses of the contract. According to the engagement entered into at the time, the Lord promised to confer on you His Heavenly kingdom, and you, in return, promised Him “to renounce the devil with all his works and pomps”.

23. Well, now, looking back upon your past lives, have you renounced the devil, his works and pomps ? No ; so far from making open war with the spirits of darkness, which you promised in Baptism, have you not been rather their servants and slaves ? Have you not taken delight in the works of the devil ? Have you not, in fact, renounced Almighty God, and joined with the devil ? for how often do persons wish themselves and others to the devil ; and if Almighty God had taken them at their word, where would they have been now ? Can it be said that such persons renounce the devil, who have him so often in their mouths, who imitate him by their oaths and curses, and those blasphemies, which he and damned souls in hell continually vomit forth against God ? Can you be supposed to “renounce the devil, with all his works”, whilst you are wallowing in the sins of gluttony, drunkenness, impurity—whilst you are prone to the vices of anger, detraction, hatred, and revenge ? Alas ! so far from observing your Baptismal engagements, are you not every day breaking through them ? God bears with you now, but on the last day He will

bitterly reproach you with the violation of your promises. On that day He will point out the Sacred oil with which you were anointed, the white garment placed on your head, the consecrated water by which you were cleansed, and demand a strict account of the abuse of His many favours to you. If hitherto you have been so unfortunate as to defile by sin your Baptismal innocence, have recourse at once to the healing waters of Penance, to wash away the filthy stain of sin. Ah, children! never forget the promises you have made at Baptism. Up to this time you have been unfaithful to them; now renew them with earnestness and sincerity. Say from the bottom of your hearts: I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works and pomps; I renounce thy customs, laws, and maxims; I renounce thy guilty pleasures, thy false charms, thy vanities and follies.†

Q. Why are godfathers and godmothers appointed for children who are to be baptized?

A. That they may present them to the Church, and may answer in their names, and be sureties for the performance of the promises they make for them.

24. The custom of appointing godfathers and godmothers appears to have come down to us from the time of the Apostles, and to be as old as the Church. St. Dionysius, on this subject, speaks thus: "Our divine masters (it is thus he calls the Apostles) have judged it meet that there should be persons selected to present children to be baptized, that they may become spiritual fathers to those whom they hold at the font of salvation, and guides to direct them during life". The office of godfather and godmother is to present to the Church those who are to be baptized, to hold them at the font, to answer in their name, and to be sureties for the performance of the Baptismal engagements. They contract spiritual

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affinity with the children for whom they stand sponsors, as also with the parents of these children, so as to render them unable, without a dispensation, to marry the children or their parents.

Q. What are the obligations of godfathers and godmothers ?

A. They are obliged to see that the children be instructed in the Christian doctrine when they grow up, and they should watch over their morals.

25. The Catechism of the Council of Trent has the following observations in reference to this subject: "Such is the negligence with which the office of sponsor is treated in the Church, that its name only remains, whilst few, if any, have any idea of its sanctity. Let all sponsors, then, at all times recollect that they are strictly bound to exercise a constant vigilance over their spiritual children, and carefully to instruct them in the maxims of a Christian life; that they may approve themselves through life, such as their sponsors promised they should be, by the solemn ceremony of becoming sponsors". St. Augustin also says: "I most earnestly admonish you, men and women who have become sponsors, to consider that you stood as sureties before God for those whose sponsors you have undertaken to become". And, indeed, it is the paramount duty of every man who undertakes any office, to be indefatigable in the discharge of the duties which it imposes; and he who solemnly professed to be the teacher and guardian of another, should not abandon to destitution him whom he once received under his care and protection, as long as he should have occasion for either"—*Cat. Con. Trent.*

26. Godfathers and Godmothers become, as it were, sureties for their godchildren; and so they are obliged to instruct them, or at least to see that they are instructed, in matters of faith, when they come

to the use of reason. This is an obligation binding on sponsors, and on this account parents of children ought to be very particular with regard to the persons whom they select for that office. No person should be selected who has not a perfect knowledge of the first rudiments of the Christian religion; for nothing can be more injudicious than to select for the office of Godfathers or Godmothers not only persons incapable of teaching the children when they grow up, but even persons who require to be taught these things themselves.

27. Speaking of the duties of sponsors, St. Augustin comprises in a few words the lessons of instruction which they are bound to inculcate upon the minds of their spiritual children: "They ought", says he, "to admonish them to observe chastity, love justice, cherish charity; and above all, they should teach them the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the rudiments of the Christian religion"—*Cat. Con. Trent.*

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BAPTISM GIVEN THROUGH DERISION.

*The emperor Dioclesian, coming to Rome, was received with great rejoicings. Among other entertainments prepared for him, those of the stage were not neglected. In a comedy which was acted in his presence, one of the players conceived the idea of representing in a ludicrous manner the ceremonies of the Christian baptism, which could not fail to divert the assembly, who held the Catholic religion and its mysteries in contempt. A player, named Genesisus, who had learned some things concerning the Christian rites, laid himself down on the stage, feigning himself sick, and said, "Ah! my friends, I find a great weight upon me, and would gladly have it removed". The other actors answered, "What shall we do to give thee ease?" "I am resolved", said Genesisus, "to die

a Christian, that God may receive me on this day of my death, as one who seeks His salvation, by flying from idolatry and superstition". Then two comedians, one in the dress of a priest, the other of an exorcist, approached, and seating themselves at his bed-side, said, "My child, what do you demand?" At this interrogatory, Genesius, by a divine inspiration, was suddenly converted, and with great earnestness and unfeigned sincerity, replied, "The grace of Jesus Christ, and to be born again, that I may be delivered from all my sins". The ceremonies of Baptism were then, in mockery, proceeded with, and on being baptized, he was clothed with a white garment. To carry on the jest, other players, dressed like soldiers, seized Genesius, and presented him to the emperor to be examined like the martyrs. Then Genesius, standing upon the stage, said aloud, in a tone and manner that seemed to bespeak inspiration: "Hear, O emperor, and you that are here present—officers, senators, philosophers, and people—what I am going to say. I never yet so much as heard the name of *Christian*, but I was struck with horror, and I abhorred my very relations because they professed the Christian religion. I learned its rites and mysteries, that I might the more heartily despise it, and inspire you with the utmost contempt of it, by making them the subject of public derision. But whilst I was washed with the water, and interrogated, I had no sooner answered sincerely that *I believed*, than I saw a hand extended from Heaven, and beheld Angels of transcendent brightness hovering over me, who recited, out of a book, all the sins I had committed from my childhood. This book they plunged into the water, and when they afterwards presented it to me, it was whiter than the falling snow. Wherefore, I counsel you, O great and potent emperor, and all ye people who here have ridiculed these mysteries, to believe with me, that Jesus Christ is the true Lord, that He is the light and the truth; and that it is through Him you can obtain the forgiveness of your sins".

The emperor, equally astonished as enraged, ordered Genesius to be most cruelly beaten with clubs, and afterwards to be handed over to the prefect of the city, that he might compel him to offer sacrifice to the gods. The prefect commanded him to be put upon the rack, where he was torn with iron hooks for a considerable time, and then burned with torches. The martyr endured those torments with constancy, and in reply to the inhuman judge, said, "The God whom I adore and serve is the only Lord of the universe: to Him I will adhere, though I should suffer a thousand deaths for His sake; and no torments shall remove Jesus Christ from my

heart or mouth. What grieves me is, that I have so lately come to His service, and have so greatly offended Him by my former errors and impieties". Perceiving that his eloquence made a deep impression on the multitude, the prefect, without further delay, ordered his head to be struck off. Thus, our Lord, who called a Publican to the Apostleship, honoured with the glory of martyrdom this Saint drawn from the stage—the most infamous school of vice and the passions. The Baptism which St. Genesius received on the stage, was no more than a representation of the sacrament, for want of a serious intention of performing the Christian rite; but he was baptized in desire, with true contrition, and also in his own blood.

THE WHITE GARMENT OF BAPTISM.

† It is related in ecclesiastical history, that Maurita, a holy deacon of Carthage, having baptized a young man named Elpidophorus, had the affliction to see him afterwards become an apostate, and even a persecutor of the Christians. Whilst the impious man, who had been raised to the dignity of judge, sat one day in judgment upon them, Maurita made his appearance, carrying in his hand the white garment with which he had clothed Elpidophorus in Baptism. Raising it up before him, he said, in the hearing of the whole assembly: "Behold, O minister of error, this white garment which I have carefully preserved; it will be thy accuser and the witness of thy apostacy on the last day, before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. When thou camest from Baptism, washed and purified from thy sins, it served thee as an ornament; but hereafter it shall be to thee a garment of fire and flame, to torment thee for all eternity!" When Maurita had concluded, the most of the assembly was in tears, and Elpidophorus himself, leaving his tribunal, retired in confusion.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Who are appointed the ordinary ministers of Baptism?
2. Can a lay person give Baptism in a case of necessity?
3. Should we be well instructed how to give Baptism?
4. In what manner should we pour out the water in order to give Baptism?

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5. Under what circumstances should Baptism be given conditionally?
6. For the validity of Baptism, should the form be accurately said?
7. Why is it that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity should be named in giving Baptism?
8. Should we be instructed in the ceremonies of Baptism?
9. Why is consecrated water used for Baptism?
10. Why is the person to be baptized not allowed at first to enter the Church?
11. Why does the Priest breathe on the child and rebuke the devil?
12. Why is the Sign of the Cross made on the forehead and breast of the child, and salt put into its mouth?
13. What is the nature of the exorcisms which take place in Baptism?
14. Why are the Creed and the Lord's Prayer said when the child is introduced into the Church?
15. What is meant by the ceremony of touching the ears and nostrils?
16. Why is the child, before Baptism, called on to renounce the devil and his works?
17. Why is the child anointed on the breast and shoulders?
18. Why is the child interrogated as to his faith in the Blessed Trinity?
19. What is the meaning of anointing and putting a white cloth on the head, and a lighted candle in the hand of the child after Baptism?
20. Why does the Priest wear a violet stole, and then a white stole whilst baptizing?
21. What do you mean by renouncing the devil, with all his works and pomps?
22. Is the promise of renouncing the devil made in a solemn manner?
23. Have we kept that solemn promise made in Baptism?
24. Why are sponsors appointed for children in Baptism?
25. What does the Catechism of the Council of Trent say on the obligations of sponsors?
26. Are Godfathers and Godmothers obliged to instruct their godchildren?
27. What does St. Augustin say as to the duties of sponsors?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever entertain the greatest respect for the sacred ceremonies of Baptism.

2. Often beg of God to give you the grace of acting up to your baptismal engagements.

3. Have particular care of those for whom you stood as sponsors in Baptism.

PRAYER.

We now, O Lord, fully know the nature of the promises made by us at the baptismal font. We sincerely regret our violation of them, and now resolve to fulfil them evermore. Yes, Lord, we renounce from our hearts the works of the devil; we plight our faith anew to Thee; from this day forward we promise to observe Thy commandments. We are sorry for having so long despised and strayed away from Thee, and now return to Thee like the prodigal son. Receive us back, return us our baptismal robe, which we have defiled, pure and unspotted, and grant that we may lead a life entirely new, and so merit the rewards laid up for Thy faithful servants. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON CONFIRMATION.

Q. What is Confirmation?

A. A Sacrament which makes us strong and perfect Christians.

1. Yes, "Confirmation is a Sacrament which makes us strong and perfect Christians". The word confirmation means strengthening, because the Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens and fortifies us in all the graces which we have received from Jesus Christ, whether by means of Baptism or the other Sacraments. Although by Baptism we become Christians, are made the children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of Heaven, yet the devil, envying the happiness of those who have been baptized, endeavours with all his force to rob them of the grace

they received in the Sacrament of Baptism. On this account we stand in need of new help and strength, that we may be able to sustain the assaults of the enemy of mankind. This additional help Jesus Christ has given us in the Sacrament of "Confirmation"; for by it fresh strength is given to such as are baptized, to withstand the attacks of the enemy.

2. It has always been the belief and teaching of the Church, that Confirmation is a true sacrament; and the holy Council of Trent has declared against the Lutherans and Calvinists, that Confirmation is one of the seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, and that it is properly a true Sacrament, and not a mere ceremony. And, indeed, we find that Confirmation has all the three things necessary to constitute a Sacrament. In the first place, we have in Confirmation a *sensible sign*—a sign which falls under our senses—an external rite which outwardly expresses, by the holy action which the Church performs, the particular grace which God infuses into our souls. This *sensible sign* is the "imposition of hands"; the anointing with holy chrism, and the words pronounced by the bishop. Secondly, *this sign is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ*. In the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that when St. Philip the deacon had, by his preachings and miracles, converted the Samaritans, "they were baptized, both men and women", which, when the Apostles who were at Jerusalem had heard, they sent to them Peter and John; who when they were come, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost"—Acts, viii. 14. In which passage we evidently see that prayer and the laying on of their hands were the outward means used by these Apostles, by which the Holy Ghost was communicated to the Samaritans—prayer as a prepa-

ration, and laying on of their hands, as the immediate means appointed for that purpose. Thirdly, this *outward sign gives grace*; for, as we have seen, it communicates the Holy Ghost—"and they received the Holy Ghost"—who is the very Source of all graces and the Author of all holiness.

3. Baptism makes us Christians, but Confirmation "makes us strong and perfect Christians", for it completes and perfects the sanctification of our souls, by bringing down the Holy Ghost in a more particular manner to dwell in us, and to fortify and confirm us in our faith. There is then an essential difference between a person who is baptized and one who is confirmed. He who has received only Baptism is like a weak and fearful child; but he who has received Confirmation is like a strong and resolute man, like a valiant and intrepid soldier, always ready to battle for the cause of God, for the triumph of truth against error, for that of virtue against vice.

4. Baptism, indeed, makes us Christians, but still we are weak and imperfect Christians; but Confirmation "makes us strong and perfect Christians". This the Doctors and Fathers of the Church have always asserted. "The flesh", says Tertullian, "is anointed, that the soul may be fortified". And Peter Damian declares the same, speaking of Confirmation, in these words: "The Spirit is given in Baptism to pardon, but here to fight; there we are cleansed from iniquities, here we are fortified with courage". By which words he declares that the Sacrament of Confirmation was instituted by Christ to be administered after Baptism, that every Christian may be fortified in the soul with virtues against the assaults of the devil. The same does Pope Melchiades, who lived about fifteen hundred years ago, teach us in his Epistle to the Bishops of Spain: "I sought", says he, "whether Baptism or imposition of hands was the

greater Sacrament, but know that they are both great Sacraments. In Baptism a man is received in warfare, and in Confirmation he is armed to fight; in Baptism we are regenerated to life, after Baptism we are confirmed to fight; in Baptism we are washed, after Baptism we are strengthened".*

5. These different gifts of each Sacrament shone forth clearly in the Apostles; for although they were baptized, yet they were not endowed with that courage as to be able to perform those things which a Christian ought to do; therefore Christ, at His ascension, did not exhort them to enter the field of battle before they were confirmed and made "perfect Christians", saying: "Stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high"—*Luke*, xxiv. 49. As if he would say, My beloved Apostles, although you are baptized, and have received the grace of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, you are not strong enough to confess My name, nor sufficiently "perfect" and valiant to overcome all the temptations of the world and the devil; therefore go not to battle, My soldiers, until I send to you from Heaven spiritual arms, by which you may be able to defend yourselves against your adversaries and the snares of the devil.

Q. How does the Bishop give Confirmation?

A. By the imposition of hands and of prayer, that is, he holds out his hands and prays at the same time, that the Holy Ghost may descend upon those who are to be confirmed, and then makes the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads with chrism—*Acts*, iii.

6. To "give Confirmation", the Bishop, vested in pontificals, proceeds to the altar, and with the crosier in his hand, intones the *Veni Creator*. The hymn

being concluded, he turns towards those whom he is about to confirm, and pronounces these words : " May the Holy Ghost descend upon you, and the virtue of the Most High preserve you from all sin. Amen". After these words, the Bishop signs himself with the Sign of the Cross, and recites a great many prayers, by which he implores the aid of the God of holiness and strength. Then " he holds out his hands, and prays at the same time that the Holy Ghost may descend upon those who are to be confirmed" with His seven-fold gifts. This " imposition of hands" denotes the inward spreading of the Holy Ghost, or grace of God, in the soul, at the same time that the outward benediction is pronounced.

7. " And then he makes the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads with chrism". Each one in particular coming to him, the Bishop lays his hand upon him, and at the same time anoints his forehead with holy chrism, in the form of a cross, saying these words : " I sign thee with the Sign of the Cross ; I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". The chrism, which is oil mixed with balm, and blessed only by a Bishop, puts us in mind of the several advantages to which it has an allusion. The properties of oil are to cleanse and preserve metals from rust, and oil was commonly made use of to render the limbs supple and active, when persons were about to wrestle and perform other feats of agility. The oil is therefore an emblem of that spirit and activity which a Christian ought to show forth in the profession of his faith and in the performance of the duties of his religion. Oil, when burning, has also the property of giving light during the darkness of the night, and on that account signifies, when applied in Confirmation, that the Holy Ghost in descending upon those who are to be confirmed, enlightens them

amidst the darkness of the world, and inflames their hearts with the fire of charity. The sweet balm that is mixed with oil diffuses a pleasing odour, and so signifies, in Confirmation, that the Christian who is to be confirmed should diffuse, in every place, the good odour of Jesus Christ by his virtues and good works, but would render himself very culpable, if in place of edifying his neighbour, he should scandalize him, by giving evil counsel or bad example.

8. With this chrism composed of oil and balm, the Bishop "makes the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads". This anointing is made on the forehead—the forehead or countenance being the seat of bashfulness and fear—to signify that we should never blush or be afraid to confess the name of Jesus Christ, even at the peril of our lives. The anointing is made in the form of a "cross", to point out to us that we should never be ashamed of the cross of Christ, but should carry it with joy, after the example of our Lord—that we should never neglect the practices of our religion through fear of ridicule or scorn. A Christian should never, dear children, blush at poverty or humiliation or affronts; on the contrary, he should rather rejoice and glory in them, for by the patient endurance of these things, he renders himself in some way like his Divine Master, who, when on this earth, submitted to poverty, humiliations, and contempt. The "Cross" of Jesus Christ should be of more value in our eyes than gold, silver, and the richest gems.†

Q. Why does the Bishop give the persons he confirms a stroke on the cheek?

A. To put them in mind that by Confirmation they are strengthened to suffer, and if necessary, to die for Christ.

9. When the Bishop has anointed the person he confirms, on the forehead, he immediately gives him a "stroke on the cheek", and this little stroke is given "to put him in mind" that being now made a soldier of Jesus Christ by Confirmation, he must manfully fight against all his enemies, bear with meekness and patience all crosses, persecutions, and trials, for the sake and glory of his Lord, "suffer" all sorts of hardships, loss of goods, imprisonment, "and, if necessary, to die for Christ", by enduring martyrdom, and shedding the last drop of his blood.†

10. In giving "the persons he confirms a stroke on the cheek", the Bishop says, "peace be with you", to teach them the only way to true peace in this world, as well as in the next, is to suffer patiently for Christ's sake, and also to encourage them to do so by the hope of a reward, according to our Lord's promise: "learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls"—*Matt.*, xi. 29.

Q. To receive Confirmation worthily, is it necessary to be in a state of grace?

A. Yes; and children of an age to learn, should be instructed in the Christian doctrine.

11. "To receive Confirmation worthily", we should, in the first place, "be in a state of grace", because the Scriptures assure us that "the holy Spirit of wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins"—*Wis.*, i. 4. It would, therefore, be a grievous sacrilege for one who knows himself to be in a state of mortal sin to presume to receive this Sacrament without taking the necessary means to put his soul "in a state of grace", and be reconciled with God; for this reason, every one who is about to be confirmed, if he is conscious to him-

self of having committed mortal sin, should approach the Sacrament of Penance, and confess his sins with true sorrow for having offended God.

12. It is, indeed, true, that perfect Contrition, united to a desire of receiving the Sacrament of Penance, has the virtue of reconciling the sinner to God. But how can we be certain of having perfect Contrition? As it is so easy to be deceived in this matter, all those who have arrived at the use of reason should confess their sins before they approach the Sacrament of Confirmation, that they may receive it worthily. The Sacrament of Confirmation is a Sacrament of the living; it requires, then, spiritual life in him who receives it. The effect of this Sacrament is to strengthen and increase spiritual life in the soul; but it is impossible to strengthen the life of grace in that soul that does not possess grace.

13. "To receive Confirmation worthily", it is also necessary that "children of an age to learn, should be instructed in the Christian doctrine". Formerly the Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred on infants before they arrived at the use of reason, and so the preparation now required was not necessary; but this practice having long since ceased, and, as scarcely any person is admitted now to the Sacrament except he be "of an age to learn", a knowledge of "the Christian doctrine" is required. To learn the "Christian doctrine" is to receive instructions in the principal mysteries of our Religion, and in what regards the Commandments and Sacraments, and particularly the Sacraments we are about to receive. "To be instructed in the Christian doctrine" is to know the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, and understand the meaning of the Creed. No person should be admitted to Confirmation if he knows not these things. "With the exception of children who are so sick as to be in

danger of death", say the Fathers of the Council of Rheims, those only should be admitted to Confirmation who are instructed in the principles of Religion, and who have some knowledge of that Sacrament". When a person receives a Sacrament, he cannot be too well instructed ; and he exposes himself to great danger, when, through his own fault, he has not sufficient knowledge of the " Christian doctrine".

Q. What special preparation should be made for Confirmation ?

A. To make a good Confession, and by fervent prayer to beseech our Heavenly Father to send His Holy Spirit on you"—*Luke*, xi. 13.

14. As a special preparation for Confirmation, we should "make a good Confession"—that is, we should first examine our conscience carefully, and see in what and how often we have sinned ; and then, having excited in our hearts Contrition for our sins, we should declare them with humility and sincerity to the minister of Jesus Christ, that our hearts, purified by the absolution which he shall give, may become sanctuaries worthy of the Spirit of God, who is about to make His dwelling in them. This obligation includes all those persons who are arrived at the perfect use of reason, so as to be able to distinguish between good and evil ; and though seven years of age is the time usually mentioned, yet there being a great difference in the natural capacities of children, a judgment is to be formed of them, not so much from their years as from the marks they give of their fitness and sufficiency.

15. Another special preparation for Confirmation is "by fervent prayer to beseech our Heavenly Father to send His Holy Spirit on you". A good Confession

is a necessary and a "special preparation" for Confirmation, but it is not the only one. We should also prepare ourselves by "fervent prayer". The Holy Ghost is, indeed, goodness itself. He is always disposed to communicate His graces, but He wishes that we should ask them with fervour and perseverance. We should, therefore, dear children, during some days preceding Confirmation, frequently "beseech our Heavenly Father to send His Holy Spirit on you", and enrich your souls with His seven-fold gifts. It was by holy desires and fervent prayers that the Apostles prepared themselves for His coming; and it is by imitating their example that we shall attract Him to us. We should beg this favour with earnestness, and God, whose infinite goodness disposes Him to listen to our petitions, will not refuse to grant it.

Q. What do you think of those who receive Confirmation in the state of mortal sin?

A. They receive no benefit by it, but become more sinful, by adding to their former guilt the horrid crime of sacrilege.

16. The Sacrament of Confirmation being a Sacrament of the living, requires spiritual life in him who receives it; for being instituted to *strengthen* spiritual life in the soul, the soul should possess life before it be received. But as mortals in destroys the life of the soul, those who receive Confirmation in that state "receive no benefit by it", but bring down on themselves the maledictions of Heaven, and instead of being filled with the Holy Ghost and His seven-fold gifts, the spirit of darkness takes possession of, and exercises over them a tyrannical sway.

17. If, dear children, you "receive Confirmation in the state of mortal sin", so far from receiving any benefit by it, you "become more sinful" than you

had been before, for you add to your "former guilt the horrid crime of sacrilege". The character of the Sacrament will, it is true, be impressed on your soul; but as you have received it in the state of mortal sin, this same mark will remain with you as a token of disgrace, as a sign that you are a rebel and deserter from the cause of God; and if you repent not of your sacrilege, it will be to you a perpetual reproach among the damned, and an additional torture when suffering the pains of hell.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CONFIRMATION GIVEN BY SAINT PETER AND SAINT JOHN.

* The persecution raised in Jerusalem, after the death of St. Stephen, having dispersed the disciples, St. Philip, the deacon, went to Samaria, and converted great numbers, whom he baptized. He imparted the joyful news to the apostles, who immediately sent St. Peter and St. John to impose hands upon them, and no sooner had they done so, than the Holy Ghost visibly descended on the new converts. "They laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost"—*Acts*, viii. 17.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE AND HIS CHRISTIAN PAGE.

† Julian the apostate, resolving to make solemn profession of his impiety, ordered preparations to be made for a sacrifice to the idols in one of the pagan temples. On the day appointed, he repaired thither, accompanied by his court, in great pomp, that the sacrifice might be celebrated with all possible magnificence. All being ready, he made a sign to the priests to commence the impious rite; but what was their astonishment, when they found themselves unable to proceed with it! Their knives, which they had well prepared, could make no impression on the flesh of their victims, and the fire which they had lighted on the altar was suddenly extinguished. The sacrificing priest said, "There is some unknown power present that interrupts our ceremonies". Then addressing the emperor—"There must be", he observed, "some one present

who has been baptized or confirmed". Julian ordered that an inquiry should be made, when behold ! a boy—one of his own pages—came forward, and said, "Know, sire, that I am a Christian, and have been confirmed. A few days since I was anointed with holy oil, to strengthen me for the combat. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, who, by His cross, has redeemed me. I acknowledge Him alone for my God, and I glory in belonging to Him. It was I—or rather it was the God whom I serve—who prevented the impiety you were going to commit. I invoked the sacred name of Jesus Christ, and the demons silenced, could not be acknowledged as gods. By that sacred name—the name of the true and only God—the devils have been put to flight !" The emperor, who had formerly professed Christianity, aware of the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, was seized with terror, and, apprehending the effects of the divine vengeance, left the temple, covered with confusion, without uttering a single word. The courageous young soldier of Christ immediately reported to the Christians all that had occurred. They rendered glory to God, and acknowledged how terrible to the devils those are in whom the virtue of Jesus Christ dwells by means of the Sacrament of Confirmation, when it is received with proper dispositions. *Prudentius.*

THE RESOLUTE OFFICER DIES FOR HIS FAITH.

‡ An officer, illustrious for his birth and fortune, was on the point of obtaining a very lucrative situation, when he was accused of being a Christian—that religion excluding him, by the laws, from all offices and dignities. The governor gave him four hours for consideration, and told him to weigh well what he was going to do. During the interval which had thus been given him, he was visited by the Bishop, who took him by the hand, led him to the church, and begged of him to enter the sanctuary. Here, at the foot of the altar, the Bishop pointed to the sword which the officer wore, and presenting him, at the same time, with a copy of the Gospels, asked him which he would choose. The officer, without hesitation, with his right hand took hold of the Sacred book. "Adhere, then, to God", said the holy Bishop, "be faithful to Him, and He will fortify you, and recompense your choice.—Depart in peace". The officer went from the church, and presenting himself before the governor, made a generous confession of his faith in Jesus Christ. Sentence of death was then pronounced upon him, and he, by expiring for his faith in sharp but passing torments, merited eternal and ineffable joys.—*Merault.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why is the second Sacrament called Confirmation?
2. How do you prove that Confirmation is a Sacrament?
3. How does Confirmation make us strong and perfect Christians?
4. Can you quote any authorities in support of Confirmation being a Sacrament?
5. Was Confirmation necessary for the Apostles in order to preach the Gospel?
6. How does the Bishop commence giving the Sacrament of Confirmation?
7. What do the oil and balm used in Confirmation denote?
8. Why does the Bishop make the Sign of the Cross on the forehead when giving Confirmation?
9. Why is a stroke on the cheek given by the Bishop to the person confirmed?
10. What does the Bishop say when giving a stroke on the cheek?
11. Is it a great sacrilege to receive Confirmation in the state of sin?
12. Why should we go to Confession before receiving Confirmation?
13. Should persons be instructed in the Christian religion before they receive Confirmation?
14. In what way should we begin a special preparation for Confirmation?
15. Is prayer a necessary preparation for Confirmation?
16. Do persons who receive Confirmation in the state of mortal sin, receive any benefit from it?
17. Will the character imprinted by Confirmation be a mark of disgrace in those who receive the Sacrament unworthily?

PRACTICE.

1. Look on the Sacrament of Confirmation as a most powerful means of salvation.
2. Recollect that the Holy Ghost takes possession of the hearts of those who are confirmed.
3. When confirmed, always look on yourself as a soldier of Christ

PRAYER.

My God! we thank Thee for the instruction that has been imparted to us. We have been taught what Confirma-

tion is, and how great the benefits are that flow from it. Grant that we may receive it with proper dispositions, and never do or say anything that may in any way be inconsistent with the character which that Sacrament imprints. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRACES AND OBLIGATIONS OF CONFIRMATION.

Q. What graces are received by Confirmation?

A. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. In Baptism we received the Holy Ghost, we became His temples, and were justified by Him, and became heirs of eternal life. But by "Confirmation" He gives Himself to us with the greatest abundance of graces, bringing with Him particular gifts and special favours. These abundant graces, these special favours, which we receive "by Confirmation", are called the "seven gifts of the Holy Ghost". A gift of the Holy Ghost, generally speaking, is a *perfection*, that is, a good *supernatural* quality, which ornaments and renders perfect our souls, induces them to follow His inspirations, and to act according to His promptings. In a word, a gift of the Holy Ghost is a certain disposition implanted in our souls by Him, and which enables us to act conformably to the good thoughts and holy desires with which He inspires us.

2. The "gifts of the Holy Ghost" are seven, according to the Prophet *Isaias*, who reckons up seven most admirable gifts of this Heavenly Spirit, when he styles Him "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord"—*Isaias*, xi. 2-3.

Oh, how precious, indeed, how admirable are these gifts! Oh, how rich is that soul, which, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, is put in possession of these treasures!

Q. Repeat the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

A. Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord.

3. Confirmation communicates to all those who receive that Sacrament with proper disposition, "the seven gifts", which are in a special manner attributed to the Holy Ghost. The first of these gifts is "Wisdom", which detaches us from the things of this world, and gives us a relish for the things of God. The gift of "Wisdom" will not allow us to seek after the pleasures of the world, the esteem of men, or the world's goods, but will impart to us a knowledge and love of God, which will tend continually to Him, and seek and find Him in all things.

4. The second of the seven gifts is "Understanding". Understanding makes us penetrate the truths of religion, opens the eyes of our souls to the light of God, and sets His truths before us not merely by the light of reason or the depth of study, but in their own true and proper light. By the help of this light of the "understanding", the end of our creation, the dignity of our immortal souls, the nature of our mortal bodies, the four last things, and other Christian truths, sink deep into the soul, and have a wonderful influence upon the whole conduct of our lives.

5. The third of these gifts is "Counsel". Counsel makes known to us the way of salvation, and the difficulties we have to contend with therein—it dis-

covers to us the snares and artifices of our enemies, and guides us safe through all dangers. A soul who receives this gift of "Counsel" is warned against taking any false and dangerous steps, which those who have not received it, too often take. The fourth of the seven gifts is "Fortitude". Fortitude enables us to surmount every obstacle that may oppose our spiritual progress; it animates us to encounter all opposition from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and helps us to come off with victory in all our conflicts. It was this gift of "Fortitude" which made the Apostles invincible, and caused them to endure with heroic constancy, poverty, sickness, pain, and torment in every shape, and make light of persecutions, tortures, and even of death.*

6. The fifth gift is "Knowledge". Knowledge makes us acquainted with our duties towards God, and points out to us the good we are to practise and the evil we are to avoid. The gift of "Knowledge" instructs us in every virtue and in every duty, and directs our steps in the ways of God. This it is which made the Wise Man say that wisdom "conducted the just . . . through the right ways, and showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him a knowledge of the holy things"—*Wis.*, x. 10. The sixth gift of the Holy Ghost is "Piety". Piety makes us perform with pleasure every thing regarding the service of God; it makes us quite in earnest and perfectly fervent in the discharge of our duties, and makes us run on with vigour and alacrity in the ways of the Lord's commandments. It makes us feel compassion for the miseries of our poor brethren, and afford them every hope and solace that we can give them.

7. The seventh and last gift of the Holy Ghost is "the Fear of the Lord". The Fear of the Lord impresses on our soul a great respect for the awful

majesty of God, and a salutary dread of offending Him. This gift, then, consists, in making us fear God, not as a slave fears his master, but as a fond child fears a good father whom he loves. It consists in a sincere desire and wish to do every thing that may be pleasing to Him, by avoiding not only grievous sins, which bring down on us the wrath of God, but also the least faults, or anything that could in any way sadden the Divine Spirit. These are "the seven gifts" which we have received in Confirmation; these are the graces which that Sacrament imparts in such profusion.

Q. What obligations do we contract by Confirmation?

A. To profess our faith openly, not to deny our religion on any occasion whatever, and like good soldiers of Christ, "to be faithful to Him unto death"—*Apoc.*, ii. 10.

8. Confirmation—as also Baptism and Holy Orders—imprints a character or spiritual mark on the soul. Hence it is that these three Sacraments, having been once received, cannot be received any more, because the character which they leave on the soul, which is the mark of its consecration to God, can never be lost, and therefore they can never be repeated. The nature of this character of Confirmation, imposes on us two principal obligations.

9. The first is, "to profess our faith openly, and not to deny our religion on any occasion whatever"; to stand to our colours, to fight manfully the battles of our Lord, and rather to die than change sides, by going over to the enemy by any mortal sin. We who are confirmed are bound to defend and "profess our faith openly", when we hear the irreligious assail its dogmas, and libertines oppose its morality. We

should give testimony to Jesus Christ, that is, defend courageously the faith which He has taught us ; and we ought to oppose with earnestness and vigour those who attack it, fearing neither raileries nor threats, nor even death itself, but, “like good soldiers of Christ”, we should sustain the interests of our Master to the full extent of our ability. This is the allegiance we owe to Him in quality of His soldiers ; these are the obligations we contract when we receive the character of Confirmation.

10. “ And, like good soldiers of Christ, to be faithful to Him unto death”, is an obligation imposed on us by the character of this Sacrament. The soldiers of the world pay every attention to the laws of their calling and to the orders of their officers. They expose themselves to all kind of labours and dangers—in marches, in sieges, in battles. They endure heat and cold, and all the inclemency of the weather and the seasons ; they suffer hunger and thirst, watchings and every other hardship to which their state of life exposes them ; they undergo privations and dangers, and even death itself, and all this for the trifling consideration of a small pay. How much more, then, should we embrace with courage all the labours and sufferings to which our spiritual warfare exposes us, especially as we fight under the banner of so great a King, in his presence and in His company, and for so great a reward ! Recollect, then, dear children, that the character imprinted on your souls by Confirmation can never be effaced in this world or in the world to come ; that if you live up to its obligations, it will shine most brightly in your souls for eternity, and be no small addition to your everlasting glory and happiness in Heaven.†

Q. Is it a great sin to neglect Confirmation ?

A. Yes ; especially in these evil days, when

faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations.

11. Although Confirmation is not *absolutely* necessary for salvation, yet it is in some manner necessary for the eternal welfare of our souls, as St. Cyprian, St. Gregory, and other Holy Fathers teach; and therefore it is "a great sin to neglect" it; because those who have not received this Sacrament, are feeble and weak, like children just born—they are soldiers without arms, who are not able to oppose the spiritual attacks made on them by the devil, the world, and the flesh. It was for this reason that St. Thomas said, that it is very dangerous to think of leaving this life without having received Confirmation.

12. It is a great sin to neglect Confirmation, "especially in these evil days, when faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations". These days in which we now live, are "evil days", for a host of virulent writers are daily making attacks on our faith, and the pulpit and the platform are resounding with false charges against our religion. We are hourly assailed by the malevolent and wicked tongues of hired defamers. Almost in every part of the kingdom, emissaries of error are strolling about, seeking by bribes to destroy the faith of the people.

13. "Morals", too, are assailed, and held up to ridicule by the scoffs and sneers of persons without religion or virtue. The practices of piety are laughed at; the most essential duties of morality are made light of, and every effort made to render contemptible things most sacred and holy. Surrounded as we are in these "evil days", by so many dangers, we render ourselves guilty in not availing ourselves of such a powerful aid as that of Confirmation, in order to ward off the repeated attacks of the enemies of our salvation.

14. By neglecting Confirmation, which is so necessary to support us when our "faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations", we are guilty of "a great sin" against God; for it is God's will that we should procure, when we can do it, all the spiritual aids which we require for the salvation of our souls. Neglect not then, dear children, the reception of so necessary a Sacrament. If you receive it not, you thereby deprive yourselves of the most precious and abundant graces, and manifest an indifference to the great affair of your salvation.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

FORTITUDE IMPARTED BY CONFIRMATION.

* Constantius Chloris, father of Constantine the Great, although a pagan, had in his palace a great number of confirmed Christians, of whom many were officers of his household. One day he was desirous of putting their faith to trial, and for this purpose he assembled them all before him, and addressed them in language calculated to make them dissemble. At last he obliged them to tell him plainly whether or not they were Christians. Some, influenced by human respect, and fearful of losing the place they held in the court, denied their religion. The greater number, however, strengthened in their faith, openly declared themselves Christians. Then Constantius spoke out in undisguised language the sentiments of his heart. He praised the fortitude of those who were prepared to sacrifice worldly property sooner than deny their religion; he reproached in bitter terms the easy compliance of those who feared to maintain their religious belief. "How", said he, "can they be faithful to the emperor when they have proved so disloyal to God?" And so he removed them from his court, dismissed them from his service. With regard to those who were prepared to sacrifice everything sooner than renounce their faith, he looked on them as his most trustworthy servants; he maintained them in their office, formed his guard principally from them, and ever afterwards showed them peculiar marks of his

affection and confidence. "They are," said he, "men of character and faithful to God : they will never prove disloyal to me".

THE SACRIFICES MADE BY HORMISDAS FOR HIS FAITH.

† Hormisdas was of the chief nobility among the Persians, and was son to the governor of a province Varanes, the king of Persia, sent for him, and commanded him to renounce Jesus Christ. Hormisdas answered him : "This would offend God, and transgress the laws of charity and justice, for whoever dares to violate the supreme law of the sovereign Lord of all things, would more easily betray his king, who is only a mortal man. If the latter be a crime deserving of the worst of deaths, what must it be to renounce the God of the universe?" The king was enraged at this wise and just answer, and caused him to be deprived of his office, honours, and goods, and even stripped him of his very clothes, except a small piece of linen that went round his waist : and ordered him in this naked condition to drive and look after the camels of the army. A long time after, the king, looking out of his chamber-window, saw Hormisdas all sunburnt and covered with dust, and calling to mind his former dignity and riches, and the high station of his father, sent for him, ordered a shirt to be given him, and said to him : "Now, at least, lay aside thy obstinacy, and renounce the carpenter's son". The saint, transported with holy zeal, tore the shirt or tunic, and threw it away, saying : "If you thought that I should be so easily tempted to abandon the law of God, keep your fine present with your impiety". The king, incensed at his boldness, banished him again with indignation from his presence. St. Hormisdas happily finished his course, and is named in the Roman Martyrology. —*Allan Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you understand by a gift of the Holy Ghost?
2. How many are the gifts of the Holy Ghost?
3. What do you mean by wisdom, the first gift of the Holy Ghost?
4. What do you mean by understanding, the second gift of the Holy Ghost?

5. What is meant by counsel and fortitude, the third and fourth gifts?

6. In what consist the fifth and sixth gifts, called knowledge and piety?

7. What do you understand by the fear of the Lord, the seventh gift?

8. Why cannot Confirmation, equally as Baptism and Holy Orders, be received more than once?

9. Is the open profession of our faith an obligation contracted by us when confirmed?

10. Does the sacred character of Confirmation require of us to be always faithful to Christ?

11. Is Confirmation necessary for salvation?

12. Are attacks made on our faith in these days?

13. Are the practices of piety laughed at now-a-days?

14. Are we guilty of sin by neglecting Confirmation in these days?

PRACTICE.

1. When preparing for Confirmation have recourse to all the means necessary to receive it with fruit.

2. Defer it not; for in these evil days it is very sinful to do so.

3. When you have been Confirmed, always act as becomes a soldier of Christ.

PRAYER.

We are now, O Lord, aware of the great necessity of Confirmation, and the necessity, on our parts, of preparing well for the reception of that great sacrament. By means of it strength is given to us, and fortitude imparted to us, by which we are enabled to fight like good soldiers against our enemies and the enemies of our religion. May we ever, O Lord! persevere in the grace which we received in Confirmation, and always fight resolutely in Thy service, as becomes valiant soldiers. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Q. What is the Blessed Eucharist?

A. The body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, or of either.

1. In explaining the Blessed Eucharist, the great mystery of God's love for man, how happy should we feel, dear children, could we speak of it in a manner worthy of a subject so transcendent! Oh! may the explanation to be given of it fill your hearts with tenderness and gratitude to your dear Lord, who has loved you so much as to give Himself for your food in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. Of all the Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, Baptism is indeed the most necessary, and indispensable; but the greatest and most holy is without doubt, the Blessed Eucharist. All the other Sacraments contain and give grace, it is true; but the Blessed Eucharist contains and gives us the very Author of grace and the Source of all sanctity, who is Jesus Christ Himself. The Blessed Eucharist is the third in order of the Sacraments, as it immediately follows Baptism and Confirmation. When we have been spiritually born by Baptism, and strengthened by Confirmation, the Blessed Eucharist is necessary for our support and for our perseverance in grace; for Jesus Christ tells us, that unless we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood, we shall not have life in us.

2. The Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrament; for it possesses all the necessary qualities for a Sacrament—namely an *outward sign, inward grace, and the*

institution of Jesus Christ. There is, firstly, the *outward sign*, which consists in the bread and wine, the words of Consecration pronounced over them, and the appearance of bread and wine after the Consecration. There is, secondly, the *inward grace*, which is the body and blood of Jesus Christ Himself, the Author of *all grace*, who gives Himself to us in the Sacrament to nourish our souls. There is, thirdly, the *institution of Jesus Christ*, which, as we are told in the Gospel, took place at the last supper, where He, "taking bread, gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: THIS IS MY BODY which is given for you; do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner, the chalice also, after He had supped, saying: this is the chalice, the New Testament in My blood which shall be shed for you"—*Luke*, xxii. 19.

3. The Blessed Eucharist is "the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, or of either". That is, the Sacrament of the Eucharist contains not mystically or figuratively, but truly, really, and substantially, "the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine". The doctrine of the Catholic Church is, that after the words of Consecration are pronounced over the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is contained under the outward "appearance of the bread and wine"—the whole substance of the bread being changed into His body, and the whole substance of the wine into His blood—so that the same body which was nailed for us on the Cross, and is now glorious in Heaven, is, at the same time, really present under the appearance of bread on our Altars.

4. We cannot, indeed, understand how all these wonders are effected, but we know that "no word shall be impossible with God"; and we believe them

on the word of Jesus Christ, who for us and for our sanctification has been pleased to do more than we can comprehend. We believe on the testimony of God Himself—as we shall see in a subsequent question—that He is really present in the Sacrament of the Altar, and that He nourishes our souls with the very blood which He shed for us upon the Cross, and the very flesh which He offered as a Victim for our Redemption.

Q. What means the word Eucharist?

A. A special grace or gift of God; and it also means a solemn act of thanksgiving to God for all His mercies.

5. The word “Eucharist” is derived from the Greek word, *Εὐχαριστία*, and means *grace*, and also *thanksgiving*. The Blessed Sacrament is called the “Eucharist”, because it is “a special grace and gift of God”; for of all the gifts and graces bestowed upon us by God, there is not one more “special” than that conferred upon us in the Blessed Eucharist. Though infinite in power and wisdom and love, He could not devise a greater gift nor confer on us a more “special grace”; for though He should bestow on us a thousand worlds, the gift would not be so rich as that of giving Himself to us, even once only in the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Eucharist is the greatest of all graces; for it contains not only particular graces, as the other Sacraments do, but contains even Jesus Christ Himself, the Fountain and Source of all graces and of all gifts. The Blessed Eucharist “also means a solemn act of thanksgiving to God for all His mercies”, because our Lord, in instituting it, gave thanks to His Father, as we read in the Gospel of St. Mark; and again, because in offering and receiving the body and blood of Jesus

Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, we make "a solemn act of thanksgiving to God for all His mercies" and favours, particularly for His great mercy in becoming Man for our Redemption.

Q. What do you mean by the appearances of bread and wine?

A. I mean the taste, colour, and form of bread and wine, which still remain after the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ.

6. "By the appearances of bread and wine" are meant the outward show which they present to our senses. In all bodily objects about us, there are connected with them two things, namely, the inward matter or *substance*, and the outward appearance which they present—such as their colour, size, shape, taste, smell, and other equally sensible qualities. These sensible qualities or outward "appearances" are the proper objects of our knowledge; and of them we are certain, from the testimony of our senses. But with regard to the inward matter or substance of bodies, or to its nature or form, this is altogether concealed and hidden from our eyes—not even can we form any idea, or conceive any notion of it.

7. Now, what our Holy Faith teaches us concerning the change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ is: that this inward imperceptible substance of the bread and wine is entirely taken away, at the Consecration, by the Almighty power of God, in His changing it into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which is substituted in its place; but that all the outward sensible qualities of the bread and wine remain entirely the same as before Consecration. These outward sensible qualities are called, as we have already said, the "appearances of

bread and wine", and mean "the taste, colour, and form of bread and wine, which still remain after the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ".

Q. Are both the body and blood of Christ under the appearance of bread, and under the appearance of wine?

A. Yes; Christ is whole and entire, true God and true Man, under the appearance of each.

8. As the body of our Lord, in the Blessed Eucharist, is a living body—such as it was when He said to His Apostles, "This is My body"—it follows that He "is whole and entire" under each species and under each particle of each species. Under the appearance of bread is the body of Jesus Christ; but as it is the living body of Jesus Christ, which is now glorious and immortal, and cannot be divided, His blood is not separable from, but united to, that body. Where the body is, the blood, soul, and divinity must necessarily be. Under the appearance of bread is the body of Jesus Christ, united to His blood, His soul, and divinity; and under the appearance of wine is His blood, united with His body, His soul, and His divinity. True it is that by the words of Consecration—"This is My body"—His body only is mentioned as present under the form of bread; and by the words "This is My blood", His blood only is mentioned as present under the appearance of wine: yet, on account of the indissoluble connection by which His body and blood, His soul and divinity, are united, Jesus Christ, "whole and entire", is truly, really, and substantially present, "under the appearance of each"—under the appearance of bread, and under the appearance of wine.

9. On this account, the humble Christian who

receives Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread only, receives Him "whole and entire"—a full and perfect Sacrament. And though he should receive Jesus Christ under the appearance of wine only, he receives Him "whole and entire"—the same full and perfect Sacrament—as "whole and entire" as the Priest who consecrates and receives under the appearances of both bread and wine. And though he should receive Holy Communion under both kinds—the appearance of bread and the appearance of wine—he would not receive two Christs, nor two different Sacraments, but the same Jesus Christ and the same Sacrament, as in the former cases, but under two different forms instead of one.

Q. When the Priest divides the Host, does he also divide the body of Jesus Christ?

A. No; the Priest divides only the outward appearances, and Jesus Christ remains whole and entire in each part of the divided Host.

10. As Jesus Christ is in the Eucharist, as He is in Heaven, that is, living, glorious and immortal, it follows, that He cannot for a single instant be divided or separated into many parts; but that He is "whole and entire" under each species and under each part of each species. When, therefore, the Priest divides the Host, it is not the body of Jesus Christ that he divides, but only the species or "appearances". When the species are divided, though each particle is very small, still, under each small particle are contained the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. When, then, the Priest breaks and divides the Host, and gives you even the smallest particle, you receive Jesus Christ "whole and entire"—true God and true Man.

Q. Are we to believe that the God of all glory is under the appearance of our corporal food?

A. Yes ; as we must also believe, that the same God of all glory suffered death, under the appearance of a criminal on the Cross.

11. Yes ; we are “to believe that the God of all glory is under the appearance of our corporal food”. It is an article of our Faith, and founded on the word of God, that the Omnipotent Master of the universe, and the Creator of all things, “is under the appearance of our corporal food”. We must believe it, for God’s unerring word has told us so. We have the same grounds for this our belief, as we have for believing “that the same God of all glory, suffered death under the appearance of a criminal on the Cross”. We must profess our belief, that the *Increanted* God was born in a stable ; that though He possessed all wealth, He had not a place whereon to lay His head ; that though He could render everything in the world subservient to Him, He was born in poverty, and suffered hunger and cold ; that though He supported the entire universe by His Almighty power, He was weak and feeble ; that though superior to all the torments that mortals could suffer, He suffered agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and died a painful death on the Cross. A belief in the Eucharist is not subject to more inconveniences than a belief in the Incarnation and death of God. If we must believe in one, we cannot deny the other ; for the word of God declares both equally true. If we must believe that the “God of all glory suffered death under the appearance of a criminal on the Cross”, we must also believe, “that the God of all glory is under the appearance of our corporal food”.

Q. How can the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ ?

A. By the goodness and power of God, "with whom no word shall be impossible"—*Luke*, i. 37.

12. "Bread and wine" can "become the body and blood of Christ by the goodness and power of God", for everything is possible to Him. He who has created all things out of nothing by His word alone, can, with the same ease, destroy all these things, or change one thing into another, as He pleases. We read in the book of Exodus, that He turned the waters of Egypt into blood by the hand of Moses; that He changed Moses' dry rod into a living serpent; that He changed water into wine, at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. All these things He did in a visible manner, so as to be clearly seen by those who were looking on, which shows that it is perfectly easy for Him to change one thing into another when He pleases.

13. That one thing should appear under the outward form of another thing, can, too, be effected by "the goodness and power of God", for several instances of His power in doing so are recorded in the Scriptures. Angels often appeared to His holy servants of old, under the appearance of young men. They spoke, and walked, and eat, and touched those they appeared to, as young men would have done. In St. Luke we read, that the Holy Ghost appeared to men "in the bodily shape as a dove", at our Saviour's Baptism, and as "parted tongues of fire", descended upon the Apostles on Whit Sunday. But if we admit that these miracles have been performed "by the goodness of God", how can we deny, that in the Blessed Eucharist, He changes the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ—the outward appearance of the bread and wine remaining after the change as before? God can perform one miracle equally as the other

for He can do all things, as with Him "no word shall be impossible".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE YOUNG JEW MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED FROM DEATH BY MEANS OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

* It was a practice observed in Constantinople, when it was deemed necessary to renew the Blessed Sacrament, to allow those children who were held innocent and free from sin to consume the host that had been for some time consecrated. The historian Nicephorus tells us he was often called on in his early years to partake of the bread of the Lord, when the Sacrament was about being changed. One day, when the children were summoned from school to communicate, there was among them a young Jew, who communicated as the others. His father, by trade a glass-blower, asked the child on his return home why he had arrived at so late an hour; and having been told that he had on that morning partaken of the Eucharist, flew into so violent a passion that he snatched up his son, and cast him into the glowing furnace. The mother, not knowing what became of her child, ran through the house, crying out in a distracted manner at the loss of her son. At the end of the third day, passing by the furnace, and still lamenting his loss, she heard his voice. Not knowing at first whence the voice proceeded, she opened the mouth of the furnace, and in it discovered her child, who appeared to have suffered little or nothing from the effects of the heat. She extricated him at once, and asked how was it that he escaped unhurt the glowing oven. "A lady", the child answered, "appeared to me clothed in a purple dress, who used to throw water around me, and then the heat was cooled down, and she also gave me sustenance till now". The whole city profited by so great a miracle. The mother and son embraced the Catholic faith; but the father, who remained obstinate to every entreaty, was put to death for his crime by orders from the Emperor Justinian, in the year 552.—*Nicephorus*.

THE SACRILEGIOUS JEW AND THE MIRACLE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

† In the year 1290, a poor woman lived in Paris, who, in order to purchase some food, pawned her cloak for thirty pence in a Jew's shop. Some days before Easter she entreated the Jew to lend it to her, that she may be able to repair to church to comply with her Easter duty. "With pleasure", said the Jew; "I shall not even require it back, if you bring me a little of the bread which you call your God: I wish to see if it be God". The woman agreed, and then went to receive the Paschal Communion at St. Morny, her own parish. When the Holy Communion had been given her, she, without being perceived, concealed the sacred Host, and brought it, according to agreement, to the Jew. When he received it he placed it on the table, cut it with a penknife, and immediately blood flowed from it. His wife became very much alarmed, and made every effort to prevent him from proceeding further in the work of blasphemy. But he would not be restrained. He now forced into the Host a nail, and it bled again; then he cast it into the fire, and it came out entire. At last, he dipped it into boiling water, and no sooner had he done so than the water appeared red as it were with blood. The Host was soon seen to come up from the water, and appear in the form of a crucifix. This extraordinary occurrence amazed the Jew, and he withdrew in the greatest astonishment. In the meantime his son, who had just gone out, said to some boys whom he saw going to church, that there was no use in going to adore their God, as his father had just killed him. A woman who was then passing by, hearing the jest from the boy, entered the house, beheld the sacred Host, which was still hovering around the place, and when she appeared, descended into a small vessel which she carried in her hand. The woman at once took it to the church, and placed it in the hands of the Priest. The Bishop of Paris, being informed of what had taken place, ordered the Jew to be arrested, who, confessing his crime, received the punishment which he merited. The Jew's wife and children became Catholics, and were baptized. The miraculous Host was preserved with the greatest care at the Church of St. John-in-Greve, where it was to be seen previous to the Revolution. In the year 1295, a citizen of Paris built an oratory called the *miraculous chapel*, on the site where stood the house of sacrilege.—*Fleury's Hist.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is the Blessed Eucharist the greatest of all the Sacraments?
2. How do you prove that the Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrament?
3. What is the doctrine of the Church regarding the Blessed Eucharist?
4. Why do we believe that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist?
5. What is the meaning of the word Eucharist?
6. What do you mean by the outward and the inward matter of bodies?
7. What does our faith teach us regarding the Blessed Eucharist?
8. How do you prove that the body and blood of Christ is under the appearance of bread and wine?
9. Does a layman receive in Communion as perfectly a Sacrament as the Priest who consecrates?
10. When the consecrated Host is divided, is the body of Jesus Christ divided?
11. Are we to believe that the God of Heaven is under the appearance of bread?
12. By what means can bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ?
13. Can you prove from the Scriptures that one thing can appear under the form of something else?

PRACTICE.

1. Often think of God's great love for man in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist.
2. Have the most tender devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament, and often testify your gratitude to God, who resides in it.
3. Frequently make an Act of Faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Adorable Sacrament.

PRAYER.

Praise, honour, and glory be to Thee, O divine Redeemer, for the institution of the Blessed Eucharist! We shall never cease thanking Thee for this great pledge of Thy love and mercy. Pardon us, O Lord, for our past indifference to the inestimable benefit we possess in the Sacrament of the Altar.

232 PROMISE OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

We shall henceforward testify our gratitude and love to Thee, in adoring Thee, and receiving often at the foot of Thy Altar this Heavenly bread which Thou hast given us for our spiritual food. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE PROMISE OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Q. Are we assured that Jesus Christ changed bread and wine into His body and blood?

A. Yes; by the very words which Christ Himself said when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist at His last supper.

1. We are "assured that Jesus Christ changed bread and wine into His body and blood", by the very words of Jesus Christ Himself, when He promised that He would give Himself to us, and also when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist. "That Jesus Christ changed bread and wine into His body and blood", we are assured by the words which He said when promising us the great gift of the Blessed Eucharist.

2. In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John we are told that Christ performed a great miracle, by feeding five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes, in order to feed the hungry multitude, numbering five thousand men, that accompanied Him to the mountain to hear His doctrine. They were all astounded at the miracle, and when He had crossed the lake, they, on the next morning, followed Him. When they had reached the opposite side of the lake, and appeared before Him, Jesus taking occasion from the impression made on their minds by the multipli-

cation of loaves and fishes on the previous day, commenced speaking about the Heavenly food which He was to give to the world in the Blessed Eucharist.

3. He said to them: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to life everlasting, which the Son of Man shall give you". In these words He declares that the meat He was to give was such as would bring eternal life. This language excited their curiosity to know more about this Heavenly food; and they asked a sign by which they might believe Him, and wished to know if the food He spoke of was better than the manna which God gave their fathers in the desert. "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you: Moses gave you not bread from Heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven; for the bread of God is that which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life to the world"—*John*, vi. 32. In these words He shows that the bread of which He speaks far surpasses the manna, for He calls it the "true bread from Heaven", and that it is of such a nature as to "give life to the world".*

4. The Jews, amazed at hearing of such wonderful bread, at once said to Jesus: "Lord, give us a' ways this bread". And to this request Jesus makes this reply: "I am the bread of life". And after that He goes on to tell them, that those who come to Him, and believe in Him, should be fed with this bread, and obtain everlasting life. The Jews, hearing this, did not believe Him, but "murmured at Him", because He had said, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven"—*verse* 41. But what does our Lord say at this unbelief on the part of the Jews? Does He explain away the literal meaning of His words—that meaning in which they understood Him? No, but He impresses on them the necessity of believing in Him and His words; and when He had told them

the great necessity of faith in Him, He goes on to repeat what He had said before, and points out, in the plainest terms, what this bread is: "I am the bread of life", says He: "your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world"—verse 48.

5. Here He repeats again the excellency of this Heavenly bread—that it is of such a nature, "that if any man eat of it, he shall not die"; and then He says, that He Himself is that living bread, and concludes by solemnly saying that the bread which He promises to give is *His flesh*—that very flesh which He gave for the life of the world: "the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world". This assertion, in its plain and obvious meaning, proves in such clear terms Jesus Christ's real presence in this bread, of which He speaks, that words more clearly and strongly expressive of it cannot be found.

6. And the Jews naturally understood him in that sense—in the sense that He meant to give them His real flesh to eat; but as they could not understand how this could be done, "they strove among themselves, saying, how can this man give us His flesh to eat?" From this text it follows that the Jews understood Christ as promising to give them *His real flesh* to eat, and that it was from HIS OWN WORDS that they were induced to understand Him in that sense.

7. Again, in the reply which Jesus made to the Jews, we have a convincing proof that the sense in which the Jews understood Him—the literal sense—was the very sense which He intended when He spoke of eating His flesh and blood. The reply of Jesus to the Jews when they said, "How can this man give

us His flesh to eat?" was this: "Then Jesus said unto them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of His blood, you shall not have life in you"—*St. John*, vi. These words clearly prove that the literal sense, in which the Jews understood Jesus Christ, when He spoke to them of giving them His flesh to eat, was the very sense which He Himself meant, and that it was His real flesh He promised to give them in this bread from Heaven.

8. For if we suppose that He did not intend that His words should be taken in a literal sense, but in a figurative sense, He certainly should have removed from the minds of His listeners the impression made on them by His words, and corrected the mistake into which they had fallen as to His true meaning; for He Himself had led them into that mistake by the peculiar words which He made use of in speaking to them. Seeing, therefore, that the sense in which they understood Him scandalized them, He should have at once told them,—if He had meant that what He was to give them was mere bread and mere wine,—that He did not wish to be understood literally, but figuratively,—that He meant to give them bread and wine merely as a commemoration of His death.†

9. But so far from giving such an explanation, in the next five verses, in order to give strength to His words, and to leave no doubt of His meaning on the mind of any one, He, in different forms, but almost in the same words, repeats and re-repeats the same truth, without any explanation whatever: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed; and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in Him"—*John*, vi. Now, would our good Lord, who came to seek and save

those who were lost, and enlighten those that sat in darkness, have so positively led poor sinners into so great a mistake, if He had not meant what His words implied?

Q. Did the Apostles and disciples understand that Jesus Christ promised to give them His flesh and blood?

A. Yes; they did, and as they could not understand how it was to be given, the disciples went away, and walked no longer with Him.

10. It is then certain that all those texts quoted above enforce and inculcate the reality of Christ's flesh and blood in the plainest and strongest terms; and it is most certain, they were understood in the real sense by all who were then present. Many of His disciples, hearing Him speak in such a plain and strong manner, and not being able to understand how this could be, like the Jews, were scandalized at it, and said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But, Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you?" He does not say, you *mis*-take my meaning, you *mis*understand my words, which certainly He was bound to say, and would have said, had He not meant His words to convey the meaning in which they understood Him; but, well knowing they were under no mistake on that point, He endeavoured to convince them of the truth of what scandalized them, by proposing another miracle. He appeals to His Ascension as an argument which should induce them to believe: "If, then, you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before"—verse 63.

11. He tells them that the eating of dead flesh, separated from the spirit, in the gross manner they supposed they were to eat His flesh—their error consisted in this: they grossly imagined that he was to give them His body and blood in the same shape,

form, and visible manner that they then saw it, and that they were to eat it like meat from the shambles—would profit them nothing; but that the flesh which He will give them is His glorified body, animated by His soul and life-giving divinity: “It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”. Immediately “after this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him”—*verse 67*; and He allowed them to go away without saying a word more—He gives no explanation, because He has none to give. They understand His words literally, and He speaks them literally.†

12. When the disciples were gone, “Jesus said to the twelve—Will you also go away?”—*verse 68*. In this question proposed to the Apostles we have another proof of the Real Presence. The Twelve had been present all this time,—had heard all that passed,—had seen the Jews strive, and the disciples murmur and leave their Master,—they understood His words in the same literal sense as the others had—they could, indeed, bear no other meaning; but when Jesus put the question to them: “Will you also go away?” Simon Peter, in the name of all the others, “answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life”; we believe all that Thou hast taught, no matter how difficult, because “we have believed, and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God”—*John*, vi. 69, 70.

13. Yes, they believe His words, as conveying that very meaning, in which the others, “who went back”, had refused to believe them,—they believe them as containing a promise of giving them *His real flesh to eat*, and *His real blood to drink*; and they believe Him with a firm and sincere faith, for this plain but cogent reason, because He is “the Christ, the Son of God”, whose Almighty power can make good His

word, and perform the promise He made them. The Jews and disciples left Him, because they would not believe that He could give them His flesh and blood. But the Apostles who knew that He was God, to whom nothing was impossible, who could not deceive or be deceived, submitted their understanding to His words, saying: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"—*John*, vi. 69.

14. The promise made by Jesus Christ, of giving, in the Blessed Eucharist, His body and blood for our spiritual food, was made some time before the institution of that Blessed Sacrament. We have already seen, that the Apostles believed the words of their Master when He made that promise, and were fully persuaded that He was to give them a *Heavenly, life-giving bread*, and that this Divine bread, as He told them, was His "flesh, for the life of the world". From that day forward, they were in expectation of the fulfilment of that promise, and of receiving from Him "the living bread which came down from Heaven"—*John*, vi. 51.

15. And now that promise He fulfils on the night when, for the last time, He supped with His Apostles. The day of the Pasch being come, Jesus Christ seeing that the time was at hand when He was to leave this mortal life to ascend to His Father, wished before His departure, to leave us the greatest pledge of His love. Jesus sat down at the table with the Twelve, and then fulfilled that promise which He had some time before made, of giving "*His body and blood*" for the spiritual food of His people. And "by the very words which Christ Himself said" on that solemn occasion, "when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist", we are assured that He "changed the bread and wine into His body and blood".†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

GOD UNITES HIMSELF WITH US IN THE EUCHARIST.

* In the Incarnation the Son of God took to Him our human nature by a personal union. He took it into His own Divine Person, and made it a part and portion of Himself. That personal union, which was effected in the Incarnation, is an impossibility now between us and God, for the simplest of all reasons—namely, that each of us is a human individual, not merely a human nature, but a human person, taken individually. That bars our personal union with God. God took to Him our nature, not our person. There remains only the moral union of the most intimate kind imaginable, and that is the union which takes place between Christ our Lord and God and the pious and worthy communicant when he comes to the altar rails and receives his Lord—a union the most intimate that can be conceived. No friendship that we can form on this earth for our fellow-man, no matter how much we may love him, no matter how much our hearts may go out of us to him—no friendship on this earth can at all equal or represent the union between God and ourselves in Holy Communion. Tell me—I suppose every man amongst you has a friend. “It is a good thing to have a friend”, says St. Francis de Sales; and I suppose with your kind, pure, Irish hearts, that you love your friends dearly. I know I love mine. I know this: that nothing under heaven, this minute, could give me greater pleasure than to do something or other for any friend I esteem and love, in order to show him how much I love him, and how anxious I am to please him. But what can we do, except some external service? We cannot give ourselves to our friends. We cannot enter into them. We cannot make ourselves one with them. But when the Lord, our Saviour and our God, who died for us upon the Cross—when He who is God and is infinite in the resources of His love—when He wishes to show us what friendship means, what does He do? He disguises Himself under the form of a piece of bread. He actually comes into our mouths and hearts. He dwells with us. He mingles Himself up with us. He takes possession of us. We become the very flesh of His flesh and blood of His blood. For He said to St. Augustine, “I am the food of the strong, and of those who love me; and I will not be changed into you as the food of your body is changed into you, but I will change you into Myself”. Such is the love which Jesus Christ has for mortal man,—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P*

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THE WORDS OF CHRIST, IN HIS PROMISE OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST NOT FIGURATIVE.

† And when Christ our Saviour, the Eternal Truth as He was, declared that we could not stand without Him, and that He was to be with us, or else we could do nothing, He was careful to make provision for that union with Himself; for God is not like man. Man makes many a promise, and forgets it. Man may lay down a principle, and may ignore it in practice. Man may say one thing, and may act quite another thing. But God is eternal truth, God is essential faithfulness. When God lays down a principle, He acts upon it; when God says a thing, He means it, and carries out His own word; and therefore, if Christ our Lord said, "I will be with you; I will come to you. Remain in Me: let Me remain in you. Eat of My flesh and drink of My blood. Unless you do this, you shall have no life in you". When Christ our Lord said these words, they were plain words of eternal truth, spoken in all sincerity, and carried out in all truthfulness. He spoke in no figure—He spoke with no mere spiritual meaning. He spoke of the real union between Himself and us—of that real union which He carried out and accomplished on that night of Holy Thursday, when He took bread into His hands and blessed it, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Take this and eat of it; this is my body, which shall be given for you"; and He took the chalice and breathed upon it, and said, "Take ye and drink of this, for this is My blood, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins". Then He turned to His Apostles, and said, "What I have done, you must also do in commemoration of Me". The moment He said these words, the spirit of His Priesthood went out from the Virgin's Son, and communicated itself to the twelve men around Him. They were all ordained Priests; even Judas, the unworthy one, received power to change bread and wine into the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. We need, therefore, never be alone again. Never—never. O Divine Lord and God of all Consolation! Thanks, eternal glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, O Christ, in that tabernacle! Friends may desert me, father and mother may leave me and go down into their graves, those upon whose love I counted may betray me. I am still not alone, O my God, for I can always come to Thee, find Thee, take Thee, and give Thee a throne of prayer, of gratitude, of glory, hidden in a broken and afflicted heart!—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

GOD PRESENT IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

† How, then, my friends, do you harmonise these views of God with the actual state of things of the Church? Did He promise to remain only as a guiding influence? He promised to remain as a guiding influence when He said: "My Spirit is with you, My Spirit shall not depart from you. I will remain with My Church; and the gates of hell shall never prevail against her". Here He declared that He would remain as an abiding and a guiding spirit in His Church. But He did more than this. Lest any man might be unaware of His existence in the Church, lest any man might say: "He promised to remain, and yet where shall I find Him?" He actually located, or localised Himself, and established His presence in the infallible sign of the species that remain when the substance is gone. He took bread and wine, and said: "This is my Body, this is My Blood". It is not for me—for you or for me; it is not for me, O Christ!—to demand why you were pleased to take this disguise or that. If it pleased Him to take the sand of the desert; if it pleased Him to take a blade of grass or a branch of a living tree, and holding it up before me, say: "I am here; this is Myself"—then, before that visible sign I would bow down; for I am prepared to adore my God, I care not what disguise He takes. He had, as He lay hidden in the womb, the fullness of His Divinity; and in the appearance of the little child at Bethlehem; in the appearance of the growing boy at Nazareth; in the appearance of the man teaching in the Temple at Jerusalem; under the appearance of the criminal crucified upon Mount Calvary—God was there; God was there in all the fullness of His Divinity. Disguise Him as you will, Jesus Christ was still there; and Peter, when he adored Him as the Son of God, adored what his eyes had not seen; for the eye of the flesh saw but the manhood of our Lord; and he adored the Godhead in the man. Disguise Him as you will, it is enough for me to know that He said: "I am here in all the fullness of My Divinity; in all the integrity of My human nature; in the graces that flow from these two as the Redeemer and Saviour of the world"; and the Catholic Church, for nearly nineteen hundred years, has bowed down and worshipped and adored Him".

Now, mark, my friends, that, in order to exercise the virtue of faith, two things are necessary. God must be there; for if God is not there, there can be no faith; for faith is the effort to realise God. But God must be there hidden; not visible to the eye nor palpable to the senses; for if He make

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Himself visible to the eye and palpable to the senses, as He is visible to the glorified in Heaven, there can be no faith; for faith is the argument of those things we do not see; and Christ said: "Blessed are those who believe and have not seen". God must be present; and He must be present, not seen. Behold the wonderful harmony of the Catholic worship of the Eucharist in bringing this out! The humblest Catholic child, the poorest and most illiterate person in the Catholic Church, if they want to realise God, know where they can find Him. They have only to turn into the nearest Catholic Church, and go to the altar, and there they meet God; and it is an act as heroic as that for which Peter was beatified by his Divine Master. — *Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How can we know that Jesus Christ changed bread and wine into His body and blood?
2. On what occasion did Jesus Christ promise to give us, as spiritual food, His flesh and blood?
3. What was the nature of the bread that Christ said He would give us?
4. Did the Jews believe Jesus Christ when He said that He was the living bread from heaven?
5. Does Jesus Christ's repeated promise of giving to us heavenly bread, prove the real presence?
6. Did the Jews understand, from Christ's words, that He promised to give them His flesh and blood?
7. Can you infer from Christ's reply to the Jews that He certainly promised to give them His flesh and blood?
8. Should our Lord remove any impression made by Him of giving His flesh and blood if He did not intend to give them?
9. Does Jesus Christ remove the impression made on the Jews that He was to give them His flesh and blood?
10. Does our Lord tell the disciples that they misunderstood His words?
11. What is the meaning of the words—"The spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing"?
12. Can you prove that our Lord gave us His body and blood from the answer of the apostles to Him?
13. Why did the apostles believe in the words of Christ?
14. Were the apostles in expectation that Christ would fulfil His promise to them?
15. On what occasion did Christ give us His body and blood?

PRACTICE.

1. Always recollect the goodness of Jesus Christ in giving us His body and blood, the greatest gift His love could devise.
2. Never cease giving Him thanks for so great a proof of His wisdom and love.
3. Tremble at the words of Jesus, when He tells you that unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.

PRAYER.

O Divine Jesus, we shall ever entertain a lively recollection of Thy loving kindness, in giving Thy body and blood for the food and nourishment of our souls. We have received from Thee many gifts, but the gift of the Blessed Eucharist surpasses all others, and for this glorious and Divine favour, we shall ever bless Thy Name and thank Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Q. Which are the words Christ said when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist?

A. "This is My body; this is My blood"—*Matt.*, xxvi. 26.

1. The second proof of Jesus Christ being really present in the Blessed Sacrament, is taken from the words of the institution of the Eucharist, as related by the three Evangelists—St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. The Blessed Eucharist, which the faithful receive to-day, is the very same which our Lord instituted at His last supper, and which the Apostles received—none will deny that. If, then, at the last supper, Jesus Christ gave us His body and

blood for the food of our souls, that same body and blood we now receive in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.*

2. That Jesus Christ, at the last supper, changed bread and wine into His body and blood, and gave it to us for our spiritual food, we have His own clear testimony, as related by the Evangelists. In St. Matthew we read: "And whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread, blessed it, and brake it, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat, this is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins"—*Matt.*, xxvi. 26. These words of our Saviour clearly point out, that He left us in the Blessed Eucharist His body and blood. Language could not render them plainer, as indicating the Real Presence.

3. Now, what was the impression made on the minds of the Apostles when they heard these words? Certainly that Christ then gave them His body and blood—that He was then fulfilling the promise He had some time before made to them. He had promised to give them a Heavenly bread; He had in the strongest terms assured them, again and again, that this Divine bread was His flesh and blood. They then firmly believed that they were to receive from Him His body and blood, because He, the Son of God, told them He would give it to them. When, therefore, at the last supper, they heard Christ pronounce the words of Consecration over the bread and wine, and say to them: "Take ye and eat, this is My body", and so fulfil the promise made them, they were prepared for the great miraculous gift. They expected it, and received it with a firm belief from His hands, notwithstanding any difficulties that may be started by their reason or their senses.

Q. Are there any reasons by which it can be proved that Christ spoke literally, and not figuratively, when He said : "This is My body, this is My blood"?

A. There are many reasons to show that our Lord did not speak figuratively when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist, but that He meant that His words should be taken in their literal and obvious sense.

4. The first reason is this : Christ, when He spoke these words, was making His *last will and testament*. This is evident from the words of the three Gospels. Now, the nature of a will requires that it should be worded in the most clear, formal, and distinct terms that language could furnish. This is so true, that no instance could be ever yet found of any intelligent man making a will in tropes, figures, and metaphors ; nor any instance yet found of any man of common sense interpreting a will figuratively. It is, therefore, impious to suppose, that the Son of God would have made use of tropes and the most obscure language, on one of the most solemn occasions of His life—when He was making His *Last Testament*, and in it bequeathing to us an admirable gift—the last pledge of His love. A sober man would be ashamed, on any serious occasion, to use a deceitful way of speaking ; and would it not be imputing to God the greatest folly and insincerity, to suppose that He would use deceitful language teaching His Apostles what was to be believed and practised by the whole Christian world for many ages, knowing at the same time that such belief and practice were erroneous.†

5. The second reason in proof that the words of Christ—"This is My body, this is My blood"—are to be taken in their literal sense, is this : the Apostles could not possibly understand His words in any other sense than in the literal sense, because He had already promised that He would give them His body and blood, and they believed that He would make

good His promise. Therefore, if He meant that His words should not be taken in their plain obvious meaning, He would have deceived His Apostles. His words would have been an undoubted lie, if, in saying, "Take and eat, this is My body", He meant His body only as a figure of His body; for, in figurative expressions, when the thing signified is called by the name of the sign, this sign should be obvious and known to every person, either from the nature of the thing itself, or from custom; and people should be prepared to understand it so by some previous or subsequent explanation.

6. If Christ, then, in saying to the Apostles: "Take ye and eat, for this is My body", meant only *a figure* of His body, and held out to them only a bit of bread, He would be guilty of an absurdity and a gross deception; for it is contrary to the ordinary manner of speaking, and to the common laws of speech, to call one thing by the name of another, with which it has no connexion or resemblance, and that, too, without giving to the persons addressed the slightest intimation of what is meant.

7. The third reason why the words of Christ, in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, are to be taken in the literal sense, is this: if His words are to be taken in a figurative sense, all belief in the Passion and Death of our Lord, which all Christians profess to believe, would be destroyed. For Jesus Christ has said: "The bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world". And at the Institution He said: "This is My body which is given for you"; or, as St. Paul has it, "which shall be delivered for you"; and also, "This is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins"—*Matt.*, xxvi. 28. Now, let me ask, was it not His true and real body which was delivered to die on a cross? Was it not His

true and real blood which was shed for the remission of sins? It most certainly was. But if it be said, that the Blessed Eucharist was only a figure of His flesh and blood, then it will follow as a just inference, that it was only a figure of His flesh that was crucified for us, and a figure of His blood which was shed for us "unto remission of sins", as He expressly declares that it was His body and blood that He gave His Apostles at the Last Supper.*

8. A fourth reason is this: Christ is truth itself, and cannot deceive. He cannot then—it is incompatible with His nature—lead any one into error. Now, if the words of Christ, in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, are not to be taken in their natural and obvious meaning, but in a figurative sense, He would have uttered a palpable untruth, and would have led millions of Christians into a most grievous error; for one should be reckoned guilty of lying, who makes use of words industriously designed, and purposely calculated to deceive others. Such would be the case, if our Saviour, in saying these words: "This is My body", meant only to give the figure of His body. He not only would have deceived the Apostles; but the whole Church for many ages would have been led into Idolatry, and that by His own words. It is a certain fact, that the entire Christian Church for fifteen hundred and more years believed in the Real Presence, and adored Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist; but if that doctrine be false, the whole Church was, for many ages, guilty of superstition and idolatry; and our Saviour would be the author and cause of this idolatry and superstition. Now to say, or even to think, that Christ could be capable of all this, would be a horrid blasphemy.

9. The fifth reason in proof of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, is this: Let us suppose—notwithstanding the repeated promises of

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God, notwithstanding His clear, plain language—that the doctrine of the Real Presence is a false doctrine, and that He never intended to give us flesh and blood for our spiritual food, what would follow as a consequence? Jesus Christ must have foreseen that His whole Church would, for many ages, embrace this doctrine, and fall into idolatry in consequence of it. He must have foreseen that His very words would furnish men with a reasonable ground for idolatrous worship; but can we for a moment suppose, that He would industriously have used such words, when He knew—on account of the importance attached to every word of His—that from such language would follow the most dreadful consequences—consequences which could be effectually prevented by a single word of His in explanation, if He had any explanation to give?

Q. Can you adduce any other proof from the Scriptures in favour of the Real Presence?

A. Yes; we can adduce another proof, taken from the words of St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians.

10. St. Paul, exhorting the Corinthians to fly all communication with idolatry, and by no means to partake of things offered to idols, uses this argument to convince them of the guilt of doing so: “The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?”—*I. Cor.*, x. 16. In these words he expressly declares that in the Holy Eucharist we communicate and partake of the body and blood of Christ. But how could there be a “communion of the blood of Christ”, if the chalice contained only mere wine? or how could there be a “partaking of the body of the Lord”, if the Corinthians received only mere bread? The Apostle, moreover, adds: “You cannot drink of the chalice of

the Lord and the chalice of devils ; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of devils". The sacrifices of the Gentiles, the participation of which St. Paul names "the chalice of devils", and "the table of devils", were really partaken of ; and the Apostle contrasts one with the other, to show how shocking a crime it must be for those who communicate of the body and blood of Christ, to go and communicate also "of the chalice of devils, and of the table of devils". But unless the receiving of the Blessed Eucharist be a real participation of the body and blood of Christ, the argument of St. Paul would have been ridiculous, having neither point nor meaning.

11. Another proof from Scripture can be taken from the words of the same Apostle, in the eleventh chapter of the same Epistle. In this part of his Epistle, he is reproving some abuses that had crept in among the Corinthians at their religious meetings, and he recalls to their minds the holy mysteries there celebrated. He first gives a history of the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, and records it in the very language in which it is described by the Evangelists, Mathew, Mark, and Luke, and adds that he has learned what he writes from the Lord. He then goes on to say : "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink of the chalice of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"—*I. Cor.*, xi. 27. In these words St. Paul speaks of the dreadful consequences of receiving the body and blood of the Lord unworthily, and speaks in such clear and strong language, as to convince every candid person, that he firmly believed in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. But how could the unworthy receivers "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord", if "the body and blood of the Lord" were not present,

and consequently not received by them? The Jews were "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord", because they really broke His venerable body, and shed His precious blood upon the cross. But if the Blessed Eucharist be mere bread and wine, why should a person who receives it without the proper dispositions, be laden with the great guilt of the body and blood of the Son of God? Common sense even revolts at the thought of such a crime following from so slight a cause as that of eating unworthily what is only a figure of the body and blood of the Lord; for if an unworthy receiver would be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord", it would follow, that any one who did eat the *manna* or Paschal lamb unworthily, would also be guilty of the body and blood of Christ; for these also were figures and types of the body and blood of Christ.

12. Moreover, the Apostle adds why it is that the unworthy communicant eats and drinks his own damnation; and the reason he assigns is a clear proof of his belief in the Real Presence. This reason is: because such a dreadful sinner does not discern the body of the Lord: "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord". But if Christ be not really present in the Eucharist, why should a Christian be justly punished with damnation for not *discerning* that which is not there to be *discerned*? Is not our natural reason shocked to suppose that a God of infinite justice and mercy should inflict damnation on a soul for eating, whilst in a state of sin, a bit of bread as a figure of Christ? But if the Catholic doctrine be the true doctrine; if the body and blood of Christ be really present in the adorable Eucharist, we can feel no surprise at such a severe punishment, but can easily understand the awful declaration of St. Paul; for the crime of receiving Jesus Christ into a

soul stained with mortal sin, is a crime of the blackest nature.

Q. Can any proof be given in support of the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist from the writings of the Holy Fathers ?

A. Yes ; a very convincing proof can be adduced of the doctrine of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

13. The writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers unanimously support the doctrine of the Real Presence. St. Ignatius, who lived in the second century, writing against the heretics of his time, says : " They abstain from the Eucharist and from public prayers, because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, through His goodness, raised from the dead"—*Epist. ad Smyr.* St. Cyril of Jerusalem, writing on the doctrine of St. Paul in reference to the Holy Eucharist, and reciting the words of the Institution, goes on thus : " Since Christ Himself, therefore, did so affirm and declare of the bread, This is My body, who shall henceforth presume to doubt of it ? And since He asserts and declares, This is my blood, who, I say, shall doubt, and say it is not His blood ? By His own power, in Cana of Galilee, He once changed water into wine, which has some resemblance to blood ; and shall He be thought unworthy of belief in changing wine into His blood ? Therefore, with full assurance, let us receive the body and blood of Christ, for under the type of bread, the body is given to thee, and under the type of wine, the blood ; that receiving the body and blood of Christ, thou mayest be co-partner with Him of His body and blood"—*Mys. Cat.*†

14. St. Chrysostom thus clearly expresses his belief in the real presence : " Let us always believe

God ; neither must we resist Him, although what He says may appear absurd to our senses or reason, particularly in everything which we do in the mysteries, not only looking upon the things which lie before us, but also adhering to His words ; for, by His words we cannot be deceived, but our senses are easily deceived. The former cannot be false ; the latter are often so, and often deceived. Therefore, since He has said, This is My body, let no doubt possess us, but let us believe it, and behold it with the eyes of our understanding. For we are fed with that which when the Angels behold, they tremble, and which they cannot see without alarm, on account of the glory that emanates from it ; and we are reduced to one mass with Him, Christ's body being one. What shepherd feeds his own sheep with his own members ? Nay, there are many mothers, who, after their delivery, hand over their children to be fed by other nurses. This Christ has not done, but He feeds us with His own proper body, and unites and *glues* us to Himself"—*Hom. 83, in Matth.*

15. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, arguing that when the danger of persecution is near, the faithful should be strengthened by the Holy Communion, asks : " How shall we teach or encourage them to shed their blood for Christ's name, if we refuse them the blood of Christ when they are going into battle ?" And, again : " For what Priest of the Most High is greater than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice to God the Father, and offered the same as Melchisedech offered, namely, bread and wine, that is, His own body and blood"—*Epist. ad Cor.* St. Ambrose, writing on the Eucharist, says : " Of the creation of the whole world you have read, that He spoke, and they were made ; He commanded, and they were created. Could not, therefore, the word of

Christ, which was able to create from nothing that which did not before exist, change the things which do exist into that which they were not before? For it is not less to give new natures to things, than to change their natures". If these and many other testimonies of the early Fathers, do not prove their belief in the Real Presence, there is no meaning in what they have written. The inference, then, to be drawn from what we have said, is this : that Jesus Christ is truly and really present in the Eucharist ; that He is as really there as He is in Heaven, or as He was in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST AND THE MIRACLE OF FAVERNAY.

* In the year 1608, on the 25th May, a most illustrious miracle took place in the Church of Favernay, in the province of Franche Comté, in France. On the feast of Pentecost, a large number of the faithful usually attended at that church to gain a plenary indulgence granted by the Holy See. It was customary on this great festival, to erect at the lower part of the choir a timber altar, and decorate it in the richest manner. On it there was an exposition of the holy Sacrament. A light was placed too close to the drapery, and in a moment the ornaments and the altar were in a blaze, and very soon consumed. The Monstrance, in which were two consecrated hosts, and which was placed on the altar, not only escaped uninjured, but remained suspended over the floor, without the slightest support ! In that position it remained for thirty-three hours, to the great amazement of the great numbers who flocked from every part to behold this extraordinary miracle. On Tuesday after the feast of Pentecost, a curé from the neighbouring parish—that of Menon—came, together with all his parishioners in procession, to witness the miracle of the Blessed Sacrament. As he was saying Mass at the high altar, the Monstrance descended of itself, and rested on a corporal laid on the altar. All this took

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place before the eyes of the people who were assembled in the church, among whom were selected fifty, whose testimony could not for a moment be doubted. The Archbishop of Besançon, Mgr. Ferdinand de Longevi, after a most searching investigation of the matter, declared the miracle authentic, and ordered its being published.—*Conferences by M. Vermont.*

THE INFANT AND THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

† St. Cyprian tells us, in his book *De Lapsis*, that a child, who had eaten bread steeped in wine that had been offered to idols, was one day brought by her mother to the church, whilst the Bishop was celebrating Mass, and that when the deacon was administering the chalice, and had come to the child, the little one turned aside her face by the instinct of the presence of the divine Majesty, firmly closed her mouth with her lips, and refused the chalice. The deacon, however, persisted, and notwithstanding her resistance, poured down her throat some of the sacrament of the chalice. Immediately followed sobbing and vomiting. The Eucharist could not remain in a polluted body and mouth.—*De Lapsis.*

ST. LOUIS'S FAITH IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

† Jesus Christ often presented Himself under the appearance of a young child in the blessed Eucharist. On one of these occasions it was that St. Louis made the following reply, so expressive of his great faith in the blessed Sacrament. The king was one day entreated to go to a certain church where Jesus Christ, in the form of a young child, appeared in the Eucharist, and he at once answered: "Let those", said he, "who doubt of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, go and behold this miracle; as for me, I believe in the real presence as firmly as if I beheld Him there visibly with my own eyes"—*Life of St. Louis.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is the Eucharist, which the faithful now receive, the same as Jesus Christ instituted?
2. What proof have you of Jesus Christ changing bread and wine into His body and blood?
3. Were the apostles prepared to believe that Christ gave them His body and blood?
4. Why are the words of Christ, at His last supper, to be taken in a literal sense?

5. Could not the apostles understand the words of Christ in a figurative sense ?

6. Would Christ be guilty of deception if, by His words at the last supper, He meant a figure of His body ?

7. If Christ spoke figuratively at His last supper, what would be the consequence as to His passion and death ?

8. Would Christ have led the faithful into error if He intended that His words, at His last supper, should be taken figuratively ?

9. If the doctrine of the real presence be a false doctrine, would Jesus Christ be accountable for it ?

10. How do you prove, from the words of St. Paul, that Christ is really present in the Blessed Eucharist ?

11. Can you prove, from what St. Paul says of the unworthy communicant, that Christ is really present in the blessed Sacrament ?

12. If Christ be not present in the Eucharist, can a Christian be punished for not discerning Him there ?

13. What do St. Ignatius and St. Cyril say when speaking of the blessed Eucharist ?

14. What are the words of St. Chrysostom in reference to the blessed Eucharist ?

15. What do St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose say when speaking of the adorable Sacrament of the altar ?

PRACTICE.

1. Frequently recall to mind the institution of the blessed Eucharist, and the proofs in support of the doctrine of the real presence.

2. Firmly believe that Jesus Christ, at His last supper, changed bread and wine into His body and blood.

3. Whenever you pass a church, make an act of faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

PRAYER.

O adorable Lord ! we profess our belief in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. We believe that at the last supper bread and wine were changed into Thy body and blood by Thy almighty power. We know, O Lord, that Thou canst do all things, and that by Thy word alone the world and all it contains have been created ; and we equally believe that Thou canst change one thing into another, for there is no limit to Thy great power. When Thou hast said—This is

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my body, and this is my blood, we profess, without fear or doubt, that by these words the bread and wine became Thy body and blood. Grant, dear Jesus, that our faith in Thy words may never waver.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW.

Q. Did Christ give power to the Priests of His Church to change bread and wine into His body and blood?

A. Yes, when He said to His Apostles at His last supper, "Do this for a commemoration of Me"—*Luke*, xxii. 19.

1. Jesus Christ having changed bread and wine into His body and blood, and having given both His body and blood to His disciples to be received by them, said: "Do this for a commemoration of Me". It is certain that by these words Jesus Christ commanded the Apostles to do what He had done, and consequently gave them power "to change bread and wine into His body and blood". This power "the Priests of His Church" enjoy to this day, and will enjoy to the end of time; for they are the undoubted successors of the Apostles, and inherit from them, by an uninterrupted transmission of Holy Orders, the same spiritual powers of the Priesthood which they themselves received from our Saviour. Consequently, when the Priests pronounce the words of Consecration—the words which Jesus Christ pronounced—over the bread and wine, they change the "bread and wine into His body and blood"; and when they give the people the Blessed Eucharist,

they give them His body and blood—the same that He Himself gave to the Apostles.

Q. Why did Christ give the Priests of His Church so great a power?

A. That His children, throughout all ages and all nations, might have a most acceptable Sacrifice to offer to their Heavenly Father, and the most precious food to nourish their souls.

2. Jesus Christ gave “to the Priests of His Church”, that is, to all Bishops and Priests, the power of changing bread and wine into His body and blood, and of offering them to God in the Mass, “that His children, throughout all ages and nations, might have a most acceptable Sacrifice to offer to their Heavenly Father”. By the power given “to the Priests of His Church” of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, all God’s “children”, in every country and at every time—throughout all ages and nations—“have a most acceptable Sacrifice to offer their Heavenly Father”. This most acceptable Sacrifice, which Christ once offered upon the Cross, is offered daily in the Holy Mass, upon many thousand altars “throughout all nations”. Yes, dear children, by the power given by God to the “Priests of His Church”, it is a most certain truth that we, in union with them, offer to God the most acceptable victim that can be presented to His Divine Majesty—the most agreeable adoration and thanksgiving that can be given—the greatest atonement for sin, and the most effectual offering in obtaining every Heavenly grace and blessing.

3. From the beginning of the world the “children” of God were accustomed to offer sacrifices to Him; and this was the solemn worship at which they as-

sembled, to join in paying their homage and adoration to Him. But all these sacrifices which were prescribed in the Old Law, were but figures and shadows of the great Sacrifice which, by the power given by God "to the Priests of His Church", is celebrated daily in the Holy Mass—a Sacrifice in which the Son of God Himself is both Priest and Victim.

4. Christ gave this great power "to the Priests of His Church" also, that His children might have "the most precious food to nourish their souls". The body and blood of Christ is the most precious food that we can receive, for it feeds, nourishes, and strengthens our souls, preserves in us the life of grace here, and brings us to the life of glory hereafter. This is the bread that strengthens the heart of man, that gives us force against all temptations, that weakens our passions and concupiscences, that enables us to grow up daily in virtue, and to run forward in the way of all the Divine Commandments. It supports our spiritual life by the abundant graces which it furnishes for the food and nourishment of our souls; it repairs the daily decays we are liable to from our natural infirmity and corruption, and adds new strength and vigour to carry us on happily in our journey towards Heaven.

Q. What is a sacrifice?

A. That first and most necessary act of religion, whereby we acknowledge God's supreme dominion over us, and our total dependence on Him.

5. The word "sacrifice", taken in an enlarged sense means every sort of good works which we perform with the intention of honouring God and uniting ourselves to Him—such as prayer, praise, faith, hope,

charity, contrition, and other supernatural moral virtues. But the word "sacrifice", taken in a stricter and more limited sense, means an external offering of a visible and sensible thing, made by a Priest or a lawful minister, to "acknowledge", by the *destruction* or *change* of the thing offered, the sovereign power of God, and His "supreme dominion over us" and all creatures, "and our total dependence on Him".

6. "Sacrifice" is called "that first and most necessary act of religion", because, as is evident from Exodus and Leviticus, God Himself, by His own express command, directed that sacrifices should be offered to Him. And though God should have never given precise or positive orders to offer sacrifices to Him, yet nature and reason would have taught mankind that the offering of sacrifices to God was, on their part, a "most necessary act of religion", as it was He who created them by His power, and as it is on Him they totally depended. Accordingly, we find that all nations, however barbarous and savage, that ever acknowledged a Supreme Being, have always looked upon sacrifice as a "first and most necessary act of religion", and as an essential worship due to Him. From the very beginning of the world, the holy servants of God have considered sacrifice as a "most necessary act of religion", and one that was acceptable and agreeable to Him; for we read that Abel, Noah, and Melchisedech offered sacrifices.*

7. "A sacrifice" is called an outward offering of *some sensible thing*, to distinguish it from the internal and spiritual offering by which we consecrate our hearts to God. It is called an offering *made to God*; because, as God is the Author of our being, our first beginning, and our last end, the sovereign Master of life and death, and as sacrifices were established to acknowledge "God's supreme dominion over us", the

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obvious consequence is, that sacrifice cannot be offered to any other but to God alone.

8. A "sacrifice" is an offering made by a *lawful* minister; because, as a sacrifice is a public act of religion, offered up by and for the people, the person offering it should be a public minister, and publicly appointed for that purpose. St. Paul says: "Neither doth any man take the honour upon himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was"—*Heb.*, v. 4. In the Old Law, Aaron and his descendants were chosen by God Himself to offer sacrifice to Him; and in the New Law our Saviour chose the Apostles and their successors for the same purpose.

9. The thing offered in sacrifice should be destroyed or *otherwise changed*; because, by this *destruction* or *change* of the offering, we acknowledge the supreme dominion of Almighty God over all creatures, who, as He made us out of nothing, can again destroy or change as He pleases. By this *destruction* or *change* in the thing offered, we also confess God to be the Sovereign Master of life and death, and at the same time acknowledge "our total dependence on Him", and our willingness to be treated by Him in whatever manner He pleases. It is not, however, required that the thing offered should be *really* destroyed—it is sufficient to have it *mystically* destroyed.

Q. How many kinds of sacrifices were there in the Old Law?

A. There were four: the Holocaust, the Eucharistic, the Impetratory, and the Propitiatory sacrifices.

10. The Holocaust, or whole burnt offering, was so called because the victim was wholly consumed by fire. As this kind of sacrifice was principally intended as an act of supreme homage to God, the total

destruction of the victim was necessary to represent, in the most perfect manner, the supreme dominion of God over all creatures, by which He can totally change or destroy them whenever He pleases, and with the same ease with which He created them. This sacrifice, when living creatures were slain upon the altar, was a type and figure of the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

11. In the Eucharistic or Thanksgiving offering, and also in the Sin offering and Peace offering, the victims were not wholly consumed, but parts of them reserved as a spiritual banquet for the priests and people. These sacrifices represented the Holy Sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the Mass, in which both Priests and people feed their souls on the adorable Victim there offered—the body and blood of their Redeemer. The things offered in these sacrifices were living creatures, such as sheep, lambs, oxen, pigeons, and various other animals; and when these were offered, the sacrifices were called bloody, because the victims were killed, and sometimes entirely burned upon the altar. There were also offered in these sacrifices things without life, such as fine flour, with oil and frankincense, unleavened cakes and wafers, and the like; and these were either burned or otherwise destroyed upon the altar.†

12. All these sacrifices of the Old Law, together with the Priesthood of Aaron, ordained by God for offering them, being only types and figures, as we have seen, of the perfect Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ, both of which, being “according to the order of Melchisedech”, were to last for ever, as we are told by David in his 109th Psalm—“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech”. The Priesthood of Jesus Christ is said to be “according to the order of Melchisedech”, because the priesthood

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of Melchisedech was to offer up bread and wine, according to which order, Christ continues a Priest for ever, as St. Paul tells us, offering up Himself in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, under the form of bread and wine.†

Q. What is the sacrifice of the New Law?

A. The Mass.

13. "The sacrifice of the New Law" was from time to time called by different names. First, it was called the Liturgy or Public office; because it was offered for the living and the dead. Secondly, it was called Synaxis, or uniting together; because, by the Blessed Eucharist the faithful are united with Christ and with each other. Thirdly, it was called Collect, or Congregation; because Christians met together to participate in Divine things. Fourthly, it was called Oblation; because it was offered to God in propitiation for our sins, and in thanksgiving to God. Fifthly, it received the name of Mystagogy; because it is a great mystery. And in the last place, it was called in the Latin Church as it is called now, "The Mass".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE JEWISH SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

* In the Propitiatory sacrifice or Sin offering, a part of the victim was consumed on the altar, and another part outside the camp or the city, to signify that the sinner deserved to be excluded from the society of his fellow men. In all the bloody sacrifices, he who was to offer the victim stood near it, in the front of the Temple, before the altar of sacrifices, his face turned towards the entrance of the sanctuary. He was to place his right hand on the head of the animal, &

ceremony which the sacrificing priests themselves performed when sacrifices were offered for all the people. The Levites then received the victim and sacrificed it. The victims destined for Holocausts and for Expiatory sacrifices, or Sin-offerings, were sacrificed, some on the north side, others on the south side of the altar. The blood was received into a basin by a priest, and poured on the sides of the altar where a hollow had been made. In the Expiatory sacrifices, the corners of the altar were sprinkled with the blood of the victim. The skin of the animal was taken off and cut up in pieces. Whilst the victim was being prepared for the sacrifice, a priest placed wood on the altar, and having arranged it, set it on fire, whilst the other priests carried the parts that were to be consumed and placed them on the fire.—*Guillois*.

THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW.

† There were two sacrifices offered in the day by the Jewish priests in the name of the people—one in the morning, and the other in the evening. One of these sacrifices was called bloody, and the other unbloody. The bloody sacrifice consisted of two lambs, which were offered in holocaust; one at nine o'clock in the morning, and the other at three in the afternoon. The unbloody sacrifice, which was offered every day, consisted of the oblation of sweet-scented gums and spices, mixed according to the directions of God Himself. The priest burned it morning and evening, with the sacred fire, on the golden altar. This altar was of a quadrangular form, made of the wood setim, and covered on every part with plates of gold; it was two cubits high, one broad, and one long; it stood between the golden candlestick and the table of show-bread, full against the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the sanctuary. The sacred fire alluded to here, descended from Heaven after the consecration of Aaron, and the priests were ordered to add fresh fuel to the fire every morning and evening, in order to keep it alive on the altar. The most solemn sacrifices were offered on the principal Feasts of the year. The most solemn of all was that of the Pasch, which had been instituted to return thanks to God for the deliverance of His people from the captivity of Egypt. All the Israelites, on the eve of the Festival, offered before the tabernacle spotless lambs, which were afterwards roasted and eaten in each family with unleavened bread and wild lettuces. This Feast continued seven days, during which no one was allowed, under pain of death, to eat leavened bread. The Feast second in importance with

the Jews was that of Pentecost, which was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Pasch. It was instituted to preserve and respect the memory of the publication of the Law, and of the alliance which God, through the mediation of Moses, had made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai, the fiftieth day after their departure from Egypt and the celebration of the first Pasch. On that Feast were two loaves of bread, the first fruits of the harvest, and also the Holocaust of seven lambs, the sacrifice of a goat for sin, and of two lambs, which were offered as a pacific sacrifice. The third Festival was that of the tabernacles or tents, which was celebrated after the harvest on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. It held for seven days, during which the Israelites dwelt under tents or leafy bowers, to keep up the remembrance of the wanderings of their fathers in the desert, and of their dwelling in tents during forty years before they entered the Promised land. During these seven days a great many sacrifices were offered, and rejoicings made, to which were invited the Levites, the strangers, the widows, and the orphans.—*Guillois*.

THE VESTMENTS OF THE JEWISH PRIESTS.

† To inspire respect and dignity for the sacerdotal functions, the priests had their sacred vestments made by Divine appointment. Part of their vestments were common to the whole order of priests, and part peculiar to the High-priest only. That part of the dress which was common to them all, consisted of a mitre, of a close linen tunic, and a variegated girdle that went twice round the body, and hung down to the ground at both ends. The vestments peculiar to the High-priest were, a large blue robe, the ephod with its girdle, the pectoral, and the rich mitre. The blue robe was put over the white linen tunic, and reached down to the ankles; the end of it was skirted round with pomegranates and little bells of gold that hung alternating one with the other, to the number of seventy-two. Next came the ephod, which was of very rich coloured stuff, embroidered with gold. It reached but half-way down, was closed on both sides, with an opening on the top for the head and neck. It was tied together over the shoulders by two clasps, ornamented with two precious stones of onyx, one upon each shoulder. Upon these stones were engraven the names of the twelve tribes, six upon one, and six upon the other. In the forepart of the ephod, corresponding to the breast, was an open space, about a foot square, on which was laid a rich piece of embroidery, called the pectoral. This pectoral was set with twelve precious stones, on each of which

was written the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The two words Urim and Thummim, that is, doctrine and faith, were also written on a thin plate of gold. To fasten the pectoral, there were four golden chains, one at each corner, by which it was hooked to the ephod. The ephod, though rightly fixed to the body, was tied around with embroidered gold. Upon the mitre, which was made of twisted silk, was fixed a thin plate of gold across the front, on which were seen these words: Sacred to the Lord—*Sanctum Domino.—Guillois.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How do you prove that Jesus Christ gave power to His Priests to change bread and wine into His body and blood?
2. Why was it that Christ gave so great a power to the Priests of His Church?
3. Were the sacrifices of the Old Law only figures of the great Sacrifice which the Priests of the New Law celebrate?
4. For what reason did Christ give His Priests the power of changing bread and wine into His body and blood?
5. What do you mean by the word sacrifice?
6. Why is a sacrifice the first and most necessary act of religion?
7. Why is a sacrifice called an offering of some sensible thing made to God alone?
8. Should a sacrifice be offered by a lawful minister?
9. Why should the thing offered in Sacrifice be destroyed or changed?
10. What was the Holocaust of the Old Law a figure of?
11. What were the other three sacrifices figures of?
12. Were the sacrifices of the Old Law to continue for ever?
13. What were the names given to the Mass at different times?

PRACTICE.

1. Let the power, which Christ gave to His Priests, of changing bread and wine into His body and blood, excite you to praise and bless Him.
2. Thank God for having preserved the true religion among the Jews for so many ages.
3. When you think of the many sacrifices of the Old Law, make a sacrifice of your soul and body to God.

PRAYER.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord ! for the many gifts and favours Thou hast conferred on the holy Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Law. Through them the true religion had been preserved among Thy ancient worshippers. Though often provoked by the ingratitude of the Jews, Thou didst bear with their repeated transgressions, and didst preserve them from falling into idolatrous worship. Support us, too, O God ! and let not our many offences provoke Thee to withdraw from us Thy grace, without which our lives would become miserable, and our death unhappy. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Q. What is the Mass ?

A. The Sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which are really present under the appearance of bread and wine, and are offered to God by the Priest for the living and the dead.

1. The word "Mass" is derived from a Latin word, which means to dismiss or send away. It was first used to signify the dismissing of the catechumens and penitents, after the usual prayers and sermon, and before the commencement of the sacrifice. The Mass of the catechumens and penitents continued to the offertory ; and the remaining part of the Liturgy was called the Mass of the faithful, because they only were entitled to assist at it, and at the conclusion of it, they, too, were dismissed by the words *Ite missa est*.

2. The Mass is "the Sacrifice of the body and

blood of Jesus Christ"—which had been once offered on the Cross—under the sensible "appearance of bread and wine", which are consecrated and visibly offered to God by Jesus Christ Himself, through the ministry of His "Priest for the living and the dead". From these words it is plain, that the Mass is a true and real Sacrifice, according to the definition already given of Sacrifice. The Mass is an *offering of some sensible thing*, which is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine. The Holy Mass is a sensible offering *made to God*; for to God alone the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. The offering is made through the *ministry of a lawful priest*; for Priests alone are the ministers of this Sacrifice. In the Sacrifice of the Mass the *destruction or change* of the thing offered takes place. This *destruction* was really effected on the Cross, when the body and blood of Jesus had been really separated, one from the other; but on the Altar a *mystical* separation only takes place, represented by the separate Consecration of the two different species of bread and wine.

3. The Sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God "for the living and the dead"; for, as the Mass is the common Sacrifice of the whole Church, Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering, and as it is offered up by Jesus Christ, through the ministry of His Priests, for His Church, in these three different states, we, in union with Christ and his Priests, also offer it up for the "living and the dead"—that is, for the members of the Church in Heaven, on Earth, and in Purgatory. We offer it for the living, both in Heaven and on Earth, in thanksgiving to God for the happiness of the Saints, and to obtain graces and favours for the faithful on earth; and for "the dead"—that is, for the souls of those who have departed this life and are now in Purgatory, to obtain for them the

relief of their sufferings, and a speedy admittance to Eternal glory.

Q. Can it be proved from Scripture that the Eucharist is really and truly a sacrifice of the New Law?

A. Yes; such can be clearly proved from the Old and New Testament.

4. In the Old Testament it is frequently foretold that the Church of Christ shall never be without Priests and Levites to offer up Sacrifice continually; that the converted nations should worship by Sacrifice; and that "a clean oblation" should be made to God among the Gentiles throughout the whole world. And in the New Testament we find that Jesus Christ Himself instituted and offered up this Sacrifice, and commanded it to be offered by those who were to succeed Him, until His second Coming.

5. The first proof from the Old Testament is taken from the Prophet Malachias, who says: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts"—*Mal.*, i. 10-11. In this text, the Prophet foretells three things: Firstly, that God would reject the sacrifices of the Old Law: "I will not receive a gift of your hand"; secondly, that in their place a more excellent Sacrifice would be substituted; and thirdly, that this new Sacrifice would be offered up, not merely in Jerusalem, but everywhere: "in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation". Now, these words cannot, with any propriety, be applied to anything else but to the Sacrifice of the Mass; for

the "clean oblation" which the Prophet says was to be offered up in every place, must mean the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

6. The Prophet could not mean the Sacrifice of the Cross; because the "clean oblation" mentioned in the text must be offered up "in every place", but the Sacrifice of the Cross was offered up in one place only—namely, Jerusalem. Neither can the words of Malachias be applied to good works; because the "clean oblation" mentioned by the Prophet was to take the place of the Jewish offerings, which God was to reject. But God never rejected, nor at any time meant to reject, good works performed by any one, whether Jew or Christian, provided they proceeded from a proper principle.

7. Another reason why the prophecy of Malachias cannot be supposed to mean good works is this: the Prophet says that by this "clean oblation" God was to be glorified among the Gentiles by the same means by which He was treated contemptuously by the Jews. But as He was despised and ill-treated by the Jews in their external and visible sacrifices, He must then be glorified among the Gentiles by an external and visible sacrifice, and not by spiritual sacrifices or good works, as such sacrifices are necessarily internal and invisible. As the words of the Prophet cannot, then, be applied to the Sacrifice of the Cross or to good works, they must have reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass.

8. The second proof from the Old Testament in support of the doctrine that the Holy Mass is really and truly a Sacrifice of the New Law, is taken from the 109th Psalm of the Prophet David. In that psalm Christ is addressed in these words: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent; thou art a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech". And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,

tells us that these words of the Prophet have such direct reference to Christ, that the Son of God could not, with any propriety or justice, be called a Priest according to the order of Aaron, especially as He was not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Judah. Now, Melchisedech offered sacrifice in bread and wine, as we read in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Genesis; and consequently Christ should offer sacrifice also in bread and wine, as He was a Priest for ever, "according to the order of Melchisedech". But if Christ did not offer this sacrifice in the Mass, He certainly did not offer it at all; for what He offered on the Cross was His body and blood, and not bread and wine, and so could have no resemblance to the sacrifice of Melchisedech; therefore, it is only by offering His own precious body and blood, "under the appearance of bread and wine", by the external ministry of His Priests, that He is "a Priest for ever of the order of Melchisedech".

9. Again, Christ was "a Priest *for ever* according to the order of Melchisedech", but He could not be a Priest *for ever*—but only once—according to the order of Melchisedech, if a sacrifice, according to Melchisedech's order, had been offered by Him only at the last supper, for, to be a *Priest for ever*, He should *for ever* visibly discharge the office of a Priest in the Church. But it is evident that Christ does not now discharge visibly the office of Priest in the Church; He must, then, do it by means of the Priests, who visibly sacrifice in His name and in His Person. And as Consecrating the Blessed Eucharist is the only action that Priests perform in the Person of Christ, it follows that it is only in Consecrating the Eucharist that Christ is "a Priest for ever". In performing all the other Sacraments Priests act by the power of Christ and by the authority of Christ, but not in the Person of Christ.

Q. Besides the proofs from the Old Testament, can you give any others in support of the doctrine that the Mass is a true and real sacrifice?

A. Yes; from the words which Christ said when instituting the Blessed Eucharist.

10. In addition to these proofs from the Old Testament in support of the Sacrifice of the Mass, we can adduce another very strong proof, taken from the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist at the Last Supper, where our Blessed Saviour offered up the Holy Sacrifice with His own hands. We have already said that the Sacrifice of the Mass, properly speaking, consists in the separate Consecration of the bread and wine, under the forms of which our Saviour offers Himself up to His eternal Father. Now, at the Last Supper, our Saviour actually performed this separate Consecration; therefore He actually offered up the Sacrifice of the Mass at that time. In the original Greek version, and in the Protestant version, St. Matthew and St. Mark, speaking of the cup, use this expression: "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many"; and St. Luke and St. Paul use this expression, speaking of the Host: "This is my body, which is GIVEN for you"—*St. Luke*, xxii. 19. "This is my body, which is BROKEN for you"—*I. Cor.*, xi. xx. 24. From these words, it evidently follows that our Saviour, at *that very time*, "shed His blood" and "gave His body" for the remission of sins"—*Matt.*, xxvi. 28. He does not say, as St. Luke tells us, This is my body, which *shall* be given for, but which is now, whilst I speak, *given* for you.

11. This doctrine becomes more evident still from the words used by Christ whilst He was holding the chalice in His hands: "This is my blood, of the New Testament, which is SHED for many, for the remission of sins"—*Matt.*, xxvi. 28 (Pro. trans.)

“For this is my blood, of the New Testament, which *shall be shed* for many unto the remission of sins”—*Matt.*, xxvi. 28. From these passages it is quite clear that the chalice contained what was shed for us; but what was shed for us was the blood of Christ, therefore the chalice contained the blood of Christ. But at the time of the Last Supper, Christ had not yet shed His blood for us in the Sacrifice of the Cross; therefore He shed it in the Sacrifice of His Last Supper.

12. It is plain, from the words of Christ, that He spoke of an offering that He was at that time actually making:—“This is My body, which is given for you”—and not of any other offering which He intended to make at any future time; consequently He could not mean His oblation on the Cross, which He did not make till some time after; therefore He meant the Sacrifice of His Last Supper, and therefore, in His Last Supper, Christ offered in Sacrifice His body, which was broken, and His blood, which was shed for the remission of sins. This Sacrifice, however, He did not at that time actually offer by the real effusion of His blood, which took place only at His Passion and death; but He offered it at His Last Supper *mystically*—that is, offered Himself up in the sacramental forms, under the *appearance* of death, to his eternal Father, for the remission of sins; and this is the very thing we mean by the Sacrifice of the Mass.

13. Again, Christ had no sooner offered His body and blood under the forms of bread and wine, than He immediately commanded His Apostles and their successors to do the same: “Do this for a commemoration of Me”.—that is, as St. Paul explains it, to “show forth His death till He comes”. Hence, if He offered a true and real Sacrifice of His body and blood at His Last Supper, it follows that all the Priests of

His Church must offer the same Sacrifice; and that Sacrifice they do offer, which is the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. Have you any other proof from Scripture that Christ offered the Sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper?

A Yes; the words of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, go to prove it.

14. Another proof that Christ celebrated the Sacrifice of the Mass at His Last Supper is taken from the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. The Apostle says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? . . . Behold Israel, according to the flesh. Are not they that eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? . . . but the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils. You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils"—*I. Cor.*, x. 16, 21. From these words of the Apostle it is quite clear that he looked upon the Eucharist as a sacrifice; for he compares the Blessed Eucharist with the sacrifices of the Jews and Gentiles; but as these were real sacrifices, he must look on the Eucharist as a sacrifice also.

15. St. Paul, in these words, argues that Christians, by a participation of the Eucharist, or the body of our Lord, become partakers of the Victim offered on the Altar or Table of the Lord, as the Gentiles, by eating meats offered to idols, become partakers of the tables of devils, and as the Jews, by eating of their victims, become partakers of the Levitical altar. But this mode of reasoning would be

absurd, if St. Paul did not consider the Eucharist to be a Sacrifice; for the Apostle's argument amounts to this: As a Jew who eats of the legal victims—let him eat where he will—participates of the Jewish altar; and as he who knowingly and willingly eats meat offered to idols, participates of the altar of devils so he who receives the Eucharist participates of the altar of the Lord.

16. St. Paul, too, in different parts of his Epistles, makes use of the expressions, "Table of the Lord", "Altar", and "Priest"; and in the thirteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews he says: "We have an Altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle". Now, these things of which the Apostle speaks go to prove the existence of a Christian sacrifice, for they have an essential connection with it. An "Altar" necessarily implies a sacrifice offered upon it; and the "partaking of the Altar" shows the participation of that Sacrifice by Communion.

Q. Can you prove the Sacrifice of the Mass from tradition?

A. Yes; the Sacrifice of the Mass can be proved from tradition, the ancient Liturgies, and the testimony of the Fathers.

17. All the ancient Liturgies, Latin, Greek, Arabic—the Liturgy of Jerusalem, said to be written by St. James; the Liturgy of Alexandria, written by St. Mark, and the Roman Liturgy—attest that the Sacrifice of the Mass has been everywhere offered from the Apostolic times; and as no one can point out the Priest, Bishop, or Pope who first said Mass, or the time or country in which the first Mass was said, it follows, according to the rule of St. Augustine, that we have received the Mass from Christ and His Apostles; since, if it were the invention of man, it could be traced to its inventor. The rule of St. Augu-

tin is, that whatever is *universally* believed and practised in the Church, and cannot be traced to any Bishop, or Pope, or Council, as its author, must have been taught and practised by the Apostles.

18. It would be rather tedious to enumerate all the Fathers who have borne testimony to the existence of the Sacrifice of the Mass; but we shall record here the words of St. Irenæus and St. Ambrose. St. Irenæus says: "The Apostles received the Sacrifice from Christ; the Church from the Apostles; and she offers it everywhere, according to the prophecy of Malachias, '*and in every place a pure sacrifice shall be offered*'". St. Ambrose says: "Let us, Priests, offer for the people the Sacrifice which Christ Himself offered at His Last Supper; and though we are poor in merit, yet we are entitled to honour, on account of the Sacrifice we offer. Because, though Christ does not now offer in a visible manner, yet He is offered on earth, when the body of Christ is offered; nay, it is plain that He offers in us, as it is His own words which sanctify the Sacrifice that is offered".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MASS A TRUE SACRIFICE.

* Why did He who was God take a human body—take a human heart, throbbing with the pulsations of human blood? Why did He take out of the stainless and immaculate veins of Mary that blood? Why did He take flesh that suffered and writhed under the lash when that lash fell upon Him? Why did He take that sacred head which was pierced with thorns? Oh, dearly beloved, it was not for joy—it was not for feasting—it was not for gladness, that He came. He took our humanity that in that humanity He might suffer and die—offer Himself to His Eternal Father a bleeding, torn, dying

victim, pour out every drop of the blood that circulated in that Sacred Heart, and in the shedding of that blood, in those awful sufferings, and that terrible death, wipe out the handwriting of that decree that was registered against men, and make Himself the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of all mankind. He came therefore for sacrifice. Now, sacrifice involves three things. First of all, it involves a victim to be immolated; secondly, it involves a priest who is to immolate the victim; thirdly, it involves an altar upon which the victim is laid. Thus it was when God commanded Abraham to take his only and best beloved child Isaac and to go forth. He told him at the same time to take the wood for the altar, to be himself the priest, and in Isaac He provided the victim. When in His mercy He sent His angel to stay the father's hand then did He find another victim the altar and the priest remaining the same. And so when the central hour, towards which all things, from the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future, looked, when the great hour came, the central hour in all the designs of God, in all the hopes of man, when that hour had arrived, the altar was provided upon the Hill of Calvary—that altar was the cross, which waited, with its outstretched arms, for the Victim to be laid upon it. The Victim was provided—that Victim was the Son of God, the Eternal God made Man, the child of Mary. And the Priest was there, Who was no other than Jesus Christ, offering and immolating Himself to be the Victim for the sins of mankind.

And, dearly beloved, when that last loud cry went forth from His dying lips, when that last drop of His precious blood, necessary for redemption, was shed, when the meek, thorn-crowned head bowed down in death, and the spirit, the great spirit of our Lord, went forth from Him, then in that instant all the sacrifices which foreshadowed Him in the past were fulfilled, all necessity of future sacrifices was completely abolished, the one great, perfect sacrifice was made, the one great purpose of redemption was achieved—the altar bore indeed still the Victim dead, yet, though dead, still God. For although the human soul was separated from the human body, the Divinity that dwelt within Him corporally was never for an instant separated from either the one or the other. Christ our Lord, dearly beloved, might, if His love permitted Him, be satisfied with that one and perfect sacrifice, Christ our Lord might, if He so willed it; have left no trace of Himself upon the earth save in the truth of the Church's teaching and perhaps in some striking and pious commemoration of His death. But because He was God, be-

cause all things in Him are real and substantial, because in God there is no mere shadow without substance, no mere word without the essential truth which it expresses—as, for instance, in the procession of the Holy Ghost, the love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father, taking a substantial form, there is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, so also when Christ our Lord, impelled by His infinite love, determined to perpetuate unto the end of time the commemoration of the great sacrifice which He made upon Calvary, assuming to Him all the reality of His Omnipotent Godhead, He established that commemoration in a continuation of the sacrifice itself—no mere form, no mere commemorative exhibition of the death of the Lord, no mere form of words telling the people of the love of Him who suffered and died for them; no mere feasting, recalling to their minds the recollection of the wonderful supper in the upper chamber at Jerusalem; no, but the self-same sacrifice, perpetuated and continued, the same Victim, the same Priest, and all but the same altar.—*V. Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

CHRIST GIVEN TO US IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

† But what about the individual? It is not so much the purification of my nature—our common nature—that does so much concern me. I am an individual man; I am a human person. Christ, our Lord, had nothing to say to the human person in the Incarnation. How, then, am I—a human person—to enter into the graces and purity of God? Oh, behold, my brethren, how the two previous designs culminate! Christ, our Lord, multiplied Himself. Christ, our Lord, changed bread and wine into His own divine body and blood. Christ, our Lord, made Himself present in the form of man's food. That food is broken. Every child that cries for that divine bread shall have it. That human individual, that personal creature, is united to God, and the individual is sanctified as the nature of man was sanctified. The nature of man could not be redeemed or sanctified except by union with God; the individual is sanctified by the same means—union with God in the Blessed Eucharist. Thus, then, we see how the design of creation—spoiled in Adam—spoiled not only in the nature but in the individual—is made perfect in Jesus Christ, as far as regards the mystery of the Incarnation. Well, therefore, He says: "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you cannot have life in you". He was speaking to the individual. He did not

say, "you cannot have life in your nature". He put life into human nature by taking that nature upon Himself. There was life there already—life eternal—in the person of Jesus Christ. But He was speaking to individuals; and He said to them: "Unless you bring Me home unto yourselves, individually, you cannot have life in you; for I am the life—life indeed—life eternal, that came down from Heaven; and unless you eat of My flesh and drink of My blood, you cannot have life in you. But if you do this—if you eat of this flesh and drink of this blood, then you shall abide in Me, and I in you".—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

KING ETHELRED, BROTHER OF ALFRED, HEARING MASS.

† Seeing the ravages which were made in the West of England, in the year 871, by the Danes, and fearing that they would not be slow to invade the Eastern part of the country, the pious and brave king Ethelred marched on to meet them, with an army small as to numbers, but fired with a martial spirit. On the morning of the battle he attended the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and received holy Communion, to prepare himself for the desperate combat in which he was about to engage. During Mass a message was sent him, announcing that the enemy, in battle array, was advancing, and that it was necessary that he should hurry to lead his troops to battle. But Ethelred continued hearing Mass with the same fervour and recollection as before. Soon arrived other messengers telling him that not a minute was to be lost if he wished to prevent the enemy from seizing on the most advantageous positions; but Ethelred answered that he would not leave the church until he had united himself to the Conqueror of conquerors, and had obtained His blessings. When he had communicated, and when the Mass was concluded, he arose full of burning ardour, placed himself at the head of his army, and in a few hours gained a most brilliant victory over the Danes.—*See Dr. Lingard, chap. iii. vol. I., Hist. Eng.*

ST. LOUIS CENSURED FOR REMAINING TOO LONG AT CHURCH.

§ St. Louis, King of France, attended at two, and sometimes even four masses in the day. Having heard that some of his courtiers censured him for devoting to the hearing of Mass the time that was so necessary for settling the affairs of his kingdom, he said: "See how far the solicitude of these men goes! I am sure that if I devoted to the chase or to

some other frivolous amusement the time that I spend at Mass, I would not hear the slightest word of blame from one of them".

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is the meaning of the word Mass?
2. Is the Mass a true and real Sacrifice?
3. Is the Sacrifice of the Mass offered to God for the living and the dead?
4. Can the Sacrifice of the Mass be proved from the Old and New Testament?
5. Does the prophecy of Malachias regard any other sacrifice but the Sacrifice of the Mass?
6. Cannot the words of Malachias be applied to the Sacrifice of the Cross or to good works?
7. Why do you say that the prophecy of Malachias cannot regard good works?
8. How do you prove the Sacrifice of the Mass from the words of David?
9. Would Christ be a Priest for ever, if He only offered the Sacrifice of the Last Supper?
10. How do you prove the Sacrifice of the Mass from the Institution of the blessed Eucharist?
11. Do the words used by Christ, when He held the chalice, prove the reality of the Sacrifice of the Mass?
12. Could not the words of Christ over the chalice, mean His oblation on the Cross?
13. How do you prove the truth of the Sacrifice of the Mass from the words of Christ to His Apostles?
14. Can the Sacrifice of the Mass be proved from the words of St. Paul?
15. How does the truth of the Sacrifice of the Mass follow from the words of St. Paul?
16. Do the words "Table", "Altar", and "Priest", used by St. Paul, confirm the truth of the Eucharistic Sacrifice?
17. Do the ancient Liturgies attest the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass?
18. Have the Holy Fathers spoken of the existence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice?

PRACTICE.

1. Always entertain the greatest veneration for the Sacrifice of the Mass, and consider it the most august act of our religion, and the source of the greatest blessings.

2. Be filled with gratitude and love for our Redeemer, for instituting so great and valuable a Sacrifice.

3. Always maintain, with a firm faith, the truth of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

PRAYER.

O Victim of infinite value ! Who art sacrificed every day on our altars, we give Thee thanks for the instruction we have received. We have learned how great the Sacrifice of the Mass is. Hitherto we have not valued, as we should have, so great and glorious a gift ; but we promise Thee, O Lord, that henceforth we shall always feel grateful for this pledge of Thy condescension and love, and attend at its celebration with sentiments of sorrow for our sins, and with feelings of devotion towards Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON THE MASS, AND THE ENDS FOR WHICH SAID.

Q. Is the Mass a different Sacrifice from that of the Cross?

A. No; because the same Christ who once offered Himself a bleeding Victim to His Heavenly Father on the Cross, continues to offer Himself, in an unbloody manner, by the hands of His Priests, on our Altars.

1. The Sacrifice of the "Mass" is not "a different sacrifice from that of the Cross", for both are one and the same Sacrifice, because in both Sacrifices the Victim is the same, and the High-Priest or principal Offerer of the one is the High-Priest of the other. The Victim offered in the Sacrifice of the Cross was Jesus Christ; the Victim offered in the Sacrifice of the Mass is the same Jesus Christ: "The same Christ who once offered Himself a bleeding Victim to His Heavenly Father on the Cross, continues to offer Himself" also "on our Altars". The Victim of the Cross is not different from the Victim of the Mass. The Christ that offered Himself on the Cross is not different from the Christ that offers Himself upon the Altar.

2. There is no difference between these two Sacrifices except the difference in the *manner* of offering, because on the Cross, Jesus Christ offered Himself in a *bloody* manner—"a bleeding victim"—and *actually* died—His blood being really spilt and really separated from His body. But in the Mass, He offers Himself "in an unbloody manner", and dies only *mystically*—that is, His death does not really take place, but is *represented* by the separate

consecration of the bread and wine, which separate consecration denotes the separation of His sacred blood from His body.*

3. The separate consecration of bread and wine represents the death of Christ in this way: In the Blessed Eucharist, as our faith teaches us—and which we have already explained—the body and blood of Christ are truly and really present under the appearance of either bread or wine, which are one and the same as to what is contained under each species; but as to the outward appearance, they differ one from the other. But as the outward appearance of the bread more naturally represents His body, and the outward appearance of wine more naturally represents His blood; both being separately consecrated—the bread first, and then the wine—and lying separate upon the Altar, represent the real separation of Christ's blood from His body when He actually died upon the Cross. By this means our Holy Victim is offered up to God, not as a “bleeding victim”, *actually* dead, but *mystically*, or under the appearance of death.

4. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ offers Himself up “by the hands of His Priests on our Altars”; for Priests alone have the power of offering this Holy Sacrifice. Jesus Christ gave them that power at His Last Supper, when He said to His Apostles, and, in their persons, to all Priests: “Do this in commemoration of me”—that is, to offer Sacrifice in the same way as He had offered it. But as Jesus Christ is the invisible High-Priest and principal Offerer of this Sacrifice, the Priests are only His visible representatives, ordained and empowered by Him to perform in His name and authority, and as representing Him, all the exterior part of this Holy Sacrifice; and so He is offered up “by the hands of His Priests on our Altars”.

Q. Was Mass offered in the Old Law?

A. No; so great a Sacrifice was reserved for the New Law, which was to fulfil the figures of the Old Law, and to give religion its full perfection.

5. Sacrifices were offered at all times since the beginning of the world. We know from Scripture that Cain and Abel offered to God the fruits of the earth and animals, and that Noah, when he quitted the Ark, erected an altar, took some pure victims, and offered them to God as an Holocaust on that altar. We know likewise that Abraham, and the other holy men who lived before the time of Moses, offered sacrifices. The sacrifices of the Old Law were many, and were daily offered, as we have already seen; but in the Old Law the Sacrifice of the "Mass" was not offered, for "so great a Sacrifice was reserved for the New Law". All the Sacrifices of the Old Law, being only types and figures of the great Sacrifice of the Mass, ceased and gave way to the perfect Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for they were to last only till His coming.

6. That great Sacrifice of the Mass "was to fulfil the figures of the Old Law". Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, was to "fulfil", by the reality, all the "figures of the Old Law", and to offer Himself to His Father to supply all that was wanting in the sacrifices of that law; for, as St. Augustin says, finding nothing in the world pure enough to be offered to God, He came and offered Himself. Then all the sacrifices of Aaron, and all the other sacrifices, which were necessarily multiplied on account of their great imperfection, were to vanish and disappear, and leave the great Sacrifice of the Mass in their stead, and so "fulfil the figures of the old Law".

7. "To give religion its full perfection", the Mass was "reserved for the New Law". The Mass is certainly the most sublime and the most august mystery of the Christian religion, and the most divine action that can possibly be performed by man, for the Victim offered is Jesus Christ Himself; the High Priest, who is the principal Offerer, is the same Jesus Christ; and the effects it produces are, infinite honour to Almighty God, incredible joy to all the Angels and Saints in Heaven, every blessing for man, and ease and comfort to the souls of the faithful departed.†

Q. At what part of the Mass are the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ?

A. At the Consecration.

8. "The bread and wine" are "changed into the Body and Blood of Christ" at that part of the Mass called the Consecration. To comprehend this great truth, we should know that when the Priest is about to celebrate Mass, plain bread, made from wheaten flour and water, and round in form, together with ordinary wine, is laid on a table near the Altar. When the Priest has proceeded with the Mass, and has come to that part called the "Offertory", he takes the host or plain bread, and makes an offering of it to God, and then pours into the chalice the natural ordinary wine, with which he mixes a little water, and offers it also. During that part of the Mass and its continuation to the "Consecration", the plain bread and wine still remain so.

9. But when the Priest has come to the "Consecration", and pronounces over the bread and wine the words which Christ pronounced at His Last Supper—"This is My body, this is My blood"—at

that very instant the "bread and wine" undergo a total change, and become "the body and blood of Christ". The bread is no longer bread, nor is the wine any longer wine, for by the words of Consecration both "are changed into the body and blood of Christ". What was plain bread and wine before the Consecration, becomes, at the Consecration, "the body and blood of Christ", and remains so. No longer is there bread, no longer is there wine on the Altar, but in their place are present the pure "body and blood" of our Redeemer. This change is called by the Church *transubstantiation*, that is, the change of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ at the Consecration—all the outward sensible qualities of the bread and wine remaining entirely the same as before Consecration.

Q. By whom are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?

A. By the Priest, but in virtue of the words of Christ, whose Person the Priest represents at the awful moment of Consecration.

10. "The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ" by the Priest who offers the Sacrifice of the Mass. To him has Christ left this great power, when He said: "Do this in commemoration of Me", that is, change bread and wine, as you have seen Me do, into My body and blood, and offer them up in Sacrifice. Not of his own power does the Priest effect this miraculous change, "but in virtue of the words of Christ, whose Person the Priest represents at the awful moment of Consecration". In the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass there is a visible outward action, and an invisible change made, in "the bread and wine" into

the "body and blood of Christ". The outward action is performed by the Priest, authorised by Jesus Christ for that purpose; but the inward effect produced in the Sacrifice is wholly and solely the work of God. It is Jesus Christ who sacrifices invisibly, but it is the Priest who, "at the awful moment of Consecration", represents the Person of Christ, and sacrifices visibly as His representative and instrument.†

Q. What are the ends for which Mass is said?

A. To give God honour and glory, to thank Him for His benefits, to obtain the remission of our sins, and all other graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ.

11. "The ends for which Mass is said" are chiefly four: Firstly, "to give God honour and glory", and to pay Him that homage which justly belongs to Him; secondly, "to thank Him for His benefits" which we are daily receiving; thirdly, "to obtain the remission of our sins" by rendering Him propitious to us; and fourthly, to obtain "all other graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ", which we stand in need of.

12. The Mass is offered, in the first place, "to give God honour and glory"—to acknowledge His great power and majesty—to recognise His supreme dominion over us, for by means of this Sacrifice we pay God an external worship of infinite value, as it is Jesus Christ Himself,—the greatest and most perfect gift,—who is offered in the Sacrifice, and who is the Offerer Himself. All the "honour and glory" which have ever been given to God by the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Virgins, and all the Just—all the "honour and glory" that have ever been given to God by the Angels and Archangels, and the

whole Host of Heaven, are nothing in comparison to the "honour and glory" given to God even by one Mass; because there is no proportion between that which is finite and that which is infinite. The "honour and glory" given to God by the Mass are of infinite value, as Christ is the Victim and High Priest; but all the honour and glory that can be given to God by creatures, even by the most sublime intelligences, are of finite value.

13. The second end for which "Mass is said", is "to thank God for His benefits". We have received many "benefits" and favours from God. To Him we are indebted for our creation and redemption; He has preserved us through life from many dangers and snares; and in return for all these benefits, we should unceasingly give Him thanks. But as all His favours and "benefits" to us are boundless and infinite, nothing less than an infinite thanksgiving can be equivalent to the debt we owe Him.

14. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, however, we have this infinite thanksgiving; for, though all the thanks we can render God are of no value in themselves, as proceeding from us; yet because Jesus Christ, whose goodness is infinite, puts Himself here in our place, and gives infinite thanks to His eternal Father for us and in our name, we have, on that account, a gift of infinite value to offer to God, and are thus enabled to make Him an adequate return for the "benefits" conferred on us. For this reason it is that the Priest, celebrating Mass, calls on us, in the Preface, to give thanks to God: "Let us return thanks to the Lord our God"; thus reminding the congregation to unite themselves with the High Priest, Jesus Christ, and avail themselves of this favourable opportunity to give to God the thanks that are justly due to His Divine Majesty.

15. The third end for which Mass is offered, is "to

obtain the remission of our sins", and of all the punishment due to them. For this purpose was the Sacrifice first offered on the Cross—for the same purpose it still continues to be offered upon the Altar. The Mass being a *propitiatory* Sacrifice, moves the Almighty to have mercy on us, as in the Sacrifice, His own Son is presented to Him, who died for the very purpose of destroying sin, and is now, by this Sacrifice, constantly interceding with the Father for the same object. In the Mass, Jesus Christ is our Mediator and Advocate—His sacred blood will plead our cause and speak in our favour—it will cry to Heaven for mercy in our regard—it will appease the anger of His eternal Father, and disarm His justice. This Sacrifice will fill our hearts with sorrow for sin, open our eyes to the fatal consequences of it, infuse into our souls sorrow and repentance, and by these means it will obtain for us "the remission of our sins".

16. The fourth principal end for which Mass is said, is to obtain for us "all other graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ". Though of ourselves we are undeserving of any favour, yet because the Mass is a Sacrifice of *impetration*, and because Jesus Christ offers Himself up in the Mass, *with us* and *for us*, in order to obtain the "graces and blessings" we stand in need of, we have in it a most efficacious means of sanctifying our petitions, and rendering them acceptable through "Jesus Christ" our Lord. For if He has promised in the Gospel that whatever petition we shall make in His name shall be granted to us, can we be ever said to ask so properly in His name, and through His merits, as when we appear before the throne of God, with Christ as the Victim slain for the whole world, and present Him to the Eternal Father as our Advocate and Petitioner? This made St. John Chrysostom say, that of all

times, the time of the Sacrifice of the Mass is the most seasonable for obtaining the "graces and blessings" of Heaven, because the body and blood of Jesus Christ are then actually upon our Altars, and because His blood then pleads for us, the voice of which is all-powerful to obtain our petitions.

Q. To whom is the Sacrifice of the Mass offered?

A. To God alone.

17. From what has been already said, it is quite clear that the Sacrifice of the Mass cannot be offered to any one except to God alone. When we speak of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Peter, of St. Joseph, or of any other Saint, we do not mean that the Mass is offered to the Blessed Virgin, or to St. Peter, or to St. Joseph, but we mean that it is offered to God in honour of these Saints, that thanksgiving may be given to God for all the graces bestowed upon them during life, and for the glory they now enjoy in His kingdom.

Q. For whom can the Mass be offered?

A. The Sacrifice of the Mass can be offered up for the whole body of the Church, Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering.

18. We in union with Jesus Christ, our Head, can offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass for the whole Church in Heaven, upon Earth, and in Purgatory. The Mass is offered up for the Saints in Heaven, in thanksgiving to God, for the graces which He has bestowed upon them, for the glory they have acquired, and the happiness they now enjoy, and also to ask them to unite their prayers with ours, and intercede for us with God. We offer up Mass for the living, or those on earth, whether just or sinners; for the just, that they may persevere in grace; for the sinners, that they may be converted; for heretics and schis-

matics, that they may return to the bosom of the Church; and also for infidels and Jews, that God may give them the grace of knowing and embracing the true religion.

19. The Sacrifice of the Mass can be offered for the souls in Purgatory, that they may be relieved from their sufferings, and may obtain a speedy admittance to eternal glory. It has been always the custom of the Church to offer Sacrifice for her suffering children. Every one has heard of the pleasure it gave St. Monica, on her deathbed, to think she had a son a Priest, who would make daily remembrance of her soul at the Altar. Oh! what a pleasing thought! how full of consolation, to think that we can carry peace to the afflicted souls of our departed friends, administer the "drop of water" to quench their parching thirst, and shorten the time of their confinement in those excruciating flames! But Mass is not offered up for the damned, because, their unhappy lot being fixed for eternity, they are incapable of deriving any benefit from the Sacrifice.†

Q. For what other end is Mass offered?

A. To continue and represent the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. "This do", says Christ, "for the commemoration of Me"—I. Cor. xi. 24.

20. Besides the four principal ends for which Mass is offered, and of which we have just spoken, there is another very important "end" for which we offer it, and that is, "to continue and represent the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross". In the Mass, Jesus Christ continues, perpetuates, and represents on our Altars the Sacrifice which He once offered on Calvary. The Mass is a *continuation* of the Sacrifice of the Cross, because the Victim of the Mass is the same as the Victim of the Cross, and because the principal Offerer upon the Altar is the same as

the principal Offerer upon the Cross. In both Sacrifices, Jesus Christ is the Victim and principal Offerer; and for that reason the Sacrifice of the Mass is a *continuation* of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and is offered "to continue the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross".

21. The Mass also "represents the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross", for Jesus Christ, in the Offering at His last supper, commissioned His Apostles—and that commission was to be extended to the successors of the Apostles—to do what He had done. "Do this in commemoration of Me", that is, offer this Sacrifice as I have done. This Sacrifice Priests accordingly offer daily, and by that means it "represents the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross"; for, by the separate consecration of bread and wine, Jesus Christ dies *mystically*, that is, He is *represented* as slain and dead. The bread and wine being separately consecrated, one after the other, represent the real separation of Christ's body from His blood. By this separate consecration He is immolated, as it were, in the state of death on our Altars, because He is there deprived of the functions of the natural life which He had on earth, and because He is there with the signs of death on Him; and for that reason the Sacrifice of the Mass "represents the Sacrifice of the Cross".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE NOBLEMAN AND HIS DAILY ATTENDANCE AT MASS.

* Eneas Sylvius Piccolomeni, who was afterwards Pope Pius II. tells us that in a cert in town of Germany, called Svezia, there lived a gentleman of high social position, who after losing nearly his entire wealth, retired into a country

house for the sake of economising. Spending his time in great seclusion, he soon became a prey to the profoundest melancholy, so much so, indeed, that he was in a state bordering despair. While he was in this deplorable condition, the devil often suggested to him that he ought to put an end to His life: "for", said the tempter, "there is nothing for a barren tree but the woodman's axe". In this conflict of mental agony and temptations, the gentleman had recourse to a holy confessor, who gave him the following good advice: "Let no day pass without assisting at holy Mass, and make your mind quiet". The gentleman, indeed, was pleased with the advice, so much so, that he lost no time in carrying it out: and in order to prevent the possibility of ever losing Mass, he engaged a chaplain, who daily offered the adorable Sacrifice, at which he assisted with the most edifying devotion. But it happened that one day his chaplain went at an early hour to a neighbouring village, to assist a young Priest who was about to celebrate his first Mass. The devout nobleman, fearing that he would that day be deprived of the fruits of sacrifice, hastened to the same village in order to be present at it. On the way he met a peasant, who told him that he might as well turn back, because the last Mass was ended. Much disturbed in mind, the nobleman began even to shed tears. "Alas, what shall I do?" he kept repeating. "What shall I make of myself to day? Perhaps it may be the last of my poor life". The countryman was astonished to see him so much agitated; and being himself careless of his soul, he exclaimed, "I pray do not weep, my lord, do not weep: for my part, if it is a thing that can be done, I don't a bit mind selling you my share in to-day's Mass. Give me that cloak off your back, and for aught I care, my Mass is yours this moment". The nobleman thinking he would take the chance of possibly gaining something by accepting the offer, at least for his good intention in the acceptance of it, handed over his cloak, and went on his way towards the Church. There he offered a short prayer, and on his return, had hardly got to the place where the bargain had been struck, when he saw the miserable man who had conceived the profane and extravagant design of selling his Mass, hanging by the neck from an oak, and already dead, like another Judas. In fact, the temptation to self-destruction had passed into the unhappy peasant, who had voluntarily deprived himself of the aid which he might have had from the sacrifice, and designedly left himself powerless to resist the malignant suggestions of the devil. Then the worthy nobleman began to perceive how effectual was the remedy which

his confessor had advised, and was, from that moment, confirmed in his holy determination daily to assist at the divine sacrifice.

THE JEW CONVERTED BY AN EXPLANATION OF THE REAL PRESENCE.

† A Jew was amusing himself in a public square, when there passed a priest, who, accompanied by a crowd, carried the most holy Viaticum to a sick person. All the people on bended knees rendered due homage of adoration to the most Holy Sacrament; the Jew alone made no movement, nor gave any token of reverence. This being seen by a poor woman, she exclaimed, "O miserable man, why do you not show reverence to the true God present in this Divine Sacrament?" "What true God?" said the Jew sharply. "If this were so, would not there be many gods, since on each of your altars there is one during Mass?" The woman instantly took a sieve, and holding it up to the sun, told the Jew to look at the rays which passed through it, and then added, "Tell me, Jew, are there many suns which pass through the openings of this sieve, or only one?" And the Jew answering that there was but one sun, "Then", replied the woman, "why do you wonder that an incarnate God, veiled in the Sacrament, though one, indivisible, and unchangeable, should, through excess of love, place Himself in His true and Real Presence on different Altars?" By means of this illustration, he was led to confess the truth of the real presence.

SIR THOMAS MORE'S GREAT RESPECT FOR THE MASS.

† Sir Thomas More never omitted hearing Mass, notwithstanding his numerous occupations. One day, whilst he was assisting at Mass, the King's messenger came to tell him that his Majesty required his immediate presence, in order to transact with him business of the greatest importance. The chancellor said to him: "Yet a little patience. I have to present my homage and respect to a sovereign of greater power and authority; and I think it necessary to remain at the audience court of heaven until it shall be over". He never considered it as derogatory from his high position to serve Mass; and to those who reproached him for doing so, as beneath the dignity of his state, he answered: "I deem it a high honour to have it in my power to render this slight service to the greatest of sovereigns".—*Life of Sir Thomas More.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why is the Sacrifice of the Mass not different from that of the Cross?
2. Is there any difference between both Sacrifices in the manner of offering?
3. How does the separate Consecration of bread and wine represent the death of Christ?
4. By whom is Christ offered up in Sacrifice on our Altars?
5. Did the many sacrifices of the Old Law cease at the coming of Jesus Christ?
6. What was to fulfil the figures of the Old Law?
7. Why was the Mass to give religion its full perfection?
8. Do the bread and wine remain unchanged before the Consecration?
9. When are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?
10. Does the Priest, by his own power, change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ?
11. What are the four chief ends for which Mass is offered?
12. What is the first principal end for which Mass is offered?
13. What is the second chief end for which Mass is offered?
14. Why is the Mass an adequate thanksgiving to God for all His benefits?
15. In what way does the Mass obtain for us the remission of sins?
16. Why is the Mass an effectual means of obtaining for us all graces and blessings?
17. Can the Mass be offered to the Blessed Virgin and the saints?
18. Can we offer the Mass for the saints in Heaven and for the just and wicked on earth?
19. Can the Mass be offered for the souls in Purgatory?
20. Why is the Sacrifice of the Mass a continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross?
21. How does the Mass represent the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross?

PRACTICE.

1. When you assist at Mass, remember that Jesus Christ Himself is offered on the Altar.

2. Let the thought of the sufferings of your Redeemer occupy your mind during the Holy Sacrifice.
3. At the commencement of Mass offer it for God's honour and glory, and for your own sanctification.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, how can we sufficiently thank Thee for the invaluable gift we have received in the sacrifice of the Mass? Now, O dearest Lord, we recognize ourselves as unworthy of so great a favour; but henceforth we shall endeavour to be grateful for this mark of Thy great love. We beg of Thee now, through the efficacy of the Divine Sacrifice, all the graces necessary for our salvation. Convert us, and all the souls of the living, and give eternal rest to the souls in Purgatory. Amen.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE MANNER OF HEARING MASS.

Q. How should we assist at Mass?

A. With great interior recollection and piety, and with every mark of outward respect and devotion.

1. We should assist at Mass "with great recollection"; for if "recollection" be necessary at all times whilst we pray, it is particularly necessary at the time of Mass, as the Holy Sacrifice is certainly the best of all prayers. The servants of God have sometimes seen Angels assisting around the altar, and adoring their Lord during the celebration of Mass. With what sentiments of "recollection" should we therefore attend at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice where the Son of God is truly present upon the Altar, to grant us every grace and blessing! "Which of the faithful", says St. Gregory the Great, "can doubt but that in the hour of Sacrifice at the Consecration by the Priest, the Heavens are

opened, and that the choirs of Angels descend, to be present at this Mystery of Jesus Christ?" Certainly, dear children, if anything under Heaven at any time requires our "recollection", the Sacrifice of the Mass does.

2. To attain this "recollection" during the Holy Sacrifice, we should endeavour, before we go, and on our way to Mass, to divert our attention from all worldly thoughts and cares, and to keep ourselves as recollected as possible. For, to come to the Church with a mind distracted by the cares and concerns of the world, and to expect that as soon as you reach it your minds will be at once divested of all these cares, is a great mistake. If we do not endeavour to be *recollected* before we enter the Church, we cannot expect to attend at the Holy Sacrifice with the "recollection" required of us.

3. We should also "assist at Mass" with "piety", that is with fervour and love, and a great desire of pleasing God. In order to assist at Mass with "piety", we should, in the first place—if we be in the state of sin—beg of God the pardon of our offences, before Mass commences. For he who is in mortal sin, and continues in the affection to it, how can he have any true "piety"—any real will to please God? Of what avail will his prayers be, if his heart be attached to sin? Of what avail will it be to him to pray to be delivered from sin, if he continues with pleasure in it? Of what avail will it be to him to pray that he may gain Heaven, if he continues moving steadily in the way of Hell? Can such as he "assist at Mass" with "piety"? In their words they may, indeed, pretend to love Him, but their tongues lie, for their hearts are far from Him. All those, therefore, who are conscious to themselves of being in mortal sin, should when they come to Mass, endeavour, in the first place to excite themselves to a true

sorrow for their sins, and then ask pardon of God, and resolve to avoid sin in future. Let them imitate the poor penitent Publican, who at the end of the Temple poured forth his prayers, but, on account of his sins, dared not to cast up his eyes to Heaven, but struck his breast, and said: "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner".

4. Having made an act of Contrition at the beginning of Mass for the sins we have committed, we should, during the remainder of the Sacrifice, pray with fervour and earnestness to God for His favours and blessings; beseeching Him, through the merits of His Son, who is being offered up for us, to grant us pardon of our many transgressions, and grace to serve Him with fidelity evermore. We should also think of His great love and mercy to us, particularly His excessive love in descending from His Father's throne, assuming our nature, submitting Himself to every privation during His days on earth, and at last dying on the Cross in ignominy and torture for our redemption. If we pray and think in this manner during the Holy Sacrifice, we shall indeed "assist at Mass with piety".

5. "And with every mark of outward respect and devotion" we should also assist at Mass. That outward respect and devotion necessary for assisting at Mass, require of us to appear in Church in a decent manner—in such a manner as that God may look on us with pleasure and with satisfaction. If we were going to speak to some illustrious person, we would endeavour to arrange our whole exterior in such a manner as neither to shock nor disgust him—we would put on decent clothes, and assume a composed air, mixed with gravity and respect, especially if our object was to petition him for any favour. You should act in the same manner when going to, and whilst assisting at, Mass; for you have come to the

Church to appear before the King of kings, to pay Him your homage and respects, to petition for His graces and favours, and to implore His mercy.*

6. As soon as you enter the Church make an act of Faith, and profess by it that you enter into a place filled with the majesty of God, and sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ—that you have come there to pay Him your homage, and to ask for all the graces you want. Remain during Mass in a *respectful* and *devotional* attitude and posture, whether you stand or kneel, as the different parts of the Mass require. Avoid every place and thing that may cause distractions, and particularly that part of the Church where many persons come to see and be seen, to admire and to be admired, speaking to one, saluting another, and looking round on all. Such sacrilegious profaners come to Mass with an intention of erecting altar against altar, and of erecting in a certain sense idols in the Temple of the living God. Dissipated appearance, gazing looks, and an insolent negligence, announce at once those profaners of our Temples and those scandals of our religion. They do not come, like the Blessed Virgin or St. John, to assist at the sacrifice “with respect and devotion”. No; they come like the enemies and crucifiers of our Saviour, to renew the same insult to God, to perpetrate the same crime; and it is to be feared that one day they shall share in the punishment of those unhappy wretches.

7. St. Chrysostom, perceiving some persons who were wanting in “outward respect and devotion” during Mass, addressed them in these words: “You are here in the company of Angels, to sing with them the praises of God, and you have the effrontery to continue standing, laughing, and talking. I am astonished that you are not at once blasted by lightning from Heaven, and that we, who silently bear

with you, are not hurled to destruction by the same vindictive flash, for no one ever more justly deserved punishment. The Lord of Hosts is here personally present, and you have the unparalleled boldness of laughing in His face; and you look upon this insolent conduct as a trifle not worth minding or amending. But it is lost time to make reproaches or reprehensions to such abandoned men. It would be a great deal better to turn them at once out of the Church, as scandalous and profane wretches, than to tolerate any longer such pernicious examples, especially as there cannot be the smallest hopes entertained of their conversion. For persons who laugh, and jeer, and mock, at a time and in a place when and where they should be seized with secret awe, will hardly ever be truly converted".†

Q. Which is the best manner of hearing Mass?

A. To offer it to God with the Priest, for the same purpose for which it is said; to meditate on Christ's sufferings, and go to Communion.

8. "The best manner of hearing Mass", is "to offer it to God with the Priest, for the same purposes for which it is said". That you may offer the Mass in union with the Priest, read attentively the "Prayers for Mass", either in a Missal, or in some other prayer-book. If you use a Missal, you have then the very same prayers which the Priest says. If you use the "Catholic Piety", or "Key of Heaven", or "Garden of the Soul", you have in them prayers which are fully expressive of the sentiments proper for each part of the Mass. Follow the Priest by reading the prayer corresponding to what he is reciting and to the ceremonies which he is performing, and thus offer the Mass "for the same purposes for which it is said".

9. The ceremonies of the Mass are divided into six parts. The first part is the preparation which the Priest makes at the foot of the Altar. The second contains the instructions and prayers which are made at the Altar before the Priest recites the "*Credo*". The third is the oblation. The fourth is the "*Canon*" preceding and following the Consecration. The fifth, commencing at the "*Pater Noster*", includes that part of the Mass to the Communion. The sixth is thanksgiving after the Sacrifice.

10. At the commencement of Mass, the Priest bows down his head and makes an humble confession of his sins to Almighty God and to all the Saints, and then, striking his breast in testimony of a contrite heart, implores the Divine mercy for himself and those assisting. Let you do the same; present yourselves at the altar on bended knees; and with eyes cast down, as if unworthy to look up to Heaven, strike your breast, as a sign of your sorrow for sin, and cry out with the humble Publican, "God, be merciful to me a sinner". At the *Kyrie Eleison*—a prayer which the Priest repeats nine times, in imitation of the nine choirs of Angels who are unceasingly adoring and praising the great power and mercy of God—pray to God for mercy; and, looking on your sad and sinful state, entreat of Jesus Christ to cast down on you one look of pity.

11. At the "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*", the Priest unites his voice to that of the Angels, and recites that delightful hymn, the first words of which were sung by those Heavenly spirits at our Saviour's birth: "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will"; and during its recitation you should endeavour to make your hearts and minds correspond to the noble words you utter, and repeat the hymn with, if possible, all the devotion the Angels felt when they first sung it. At the "*Dominus*

"Vobiscum" the Priest invites the congregation to pray with him; and lifting up his voice, his hands, and his heart to God, salutes the people in these words: "The Lord be with you". He prays that the Lord may be with you, that He may accompany you wherever you go, may be present with you in every place, and may protect you from every danger. Let you, in answer to this prayer of the Priest, unite your sentiments with his, and whilst he is reciting the "Collect", beg fervently of Jesus Christ those graces which are necessary for your salvation.

12. The Priest has now come to the "Epistle". The "Epistle", so called because it is generally taken from the letters, or "Epistles", which the Apostles wrote to the faithful, contains some particular fact in Scripture, or some particular instruction transmitted in their writings to posterity by those to whom Jesus said: "Go, teach all nations". Whilst the Priest reads it you should listen to it with attention, and pray that the Divine word may fructify in your soul. At the "Gospel" some circumstance in the life of Jesus Christ is read aloud; and when the Priest commences, you should stand up and declare by that posture, your readiness to go and do whatever shall be commanded by your Saviour in His Gospel. At the "Creed", the Church makes a public profession of her faith, by reciting the "Nicene Creed", which contains the principal mysteries of our religion; and during the reading of it, let you accompany the Priest, not only in words, but also in spirit and heart, adoring and giving thanks to God for each of these mysteries by which Jesus Christ has redeemed and saved us.

13. At the "Offertory", the Sacrifice begins by the offering which the Priest makes of the bread and wine, which at the "Consecration" are to be changed into the body and blood of Christ. At this part of the Mass unite yourselves with the Priest in offering

to the Lord this spotless Host, that it may be immolated anew on the Altar for all your sins and frailties—for your spiritual welfare and for that of all the faithful, living and dead. At the “Preface” the Priest gives thanks to God for the innumerable benefits which we receive every day from His paternal goodness. Let you also return Him thanks for the many graces He has bestowed on you, and implore of Him a continuation of His favours.

14. At the “Canon”—a word signifying a rule, because those particular prayers, at that part of the Mass, have always been fixed, regulated, and more determined by rule, than those which have preceded the Canon—the Priest prays for the entire Church, and by name for the Pope and the Bishop of the diocese. To this general prayer for the entire Church there are added particular ones for our friends and for all who are present. And it is here that we should, too, pray for our relatives, friends, and benefactors, and all those for whom we are bound to pray, that God may grant them all graces necessary to salvation.

15. At the “Consecration” the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ by the Priest, but “in virtue of the words of Christ, whose Person the Priest represents” at that awful moment. The “Consecration” is certainly the most sacred and mysterious part of the Mass; and it is here that the powers of the body and soul should be absorbed and lost in contemplation of the God who descends on our Altars. At the “Memento for the Dead”, the Priest prays for the souls in Purgatory; and let you, in union with him, offer up your prayers for the speedy release of those suffering souls, and beg of the Father of mercies to look down on them with an eye of pity, to relieve them in their pains, and grant them eternal rest. At the “Pater noster” the Priest addresses to God the very prayer which Jesus Christ

has taught us, and he recites it aloud, that we may unite in saying it with him, and ask of God everything necessary for our souls and bodies.

16. At the "Agnus Dei", the Priest, inclined towards the Host, strikes his breast, and three times prays to God for mercy and peace. We should also at that time beg of our Redeemer pardon of our sins, and peace and rest to our souls. At the "Domine non sum dignus", the Priest striking his breast three times, declares himself unworthy to receive the body of our Lord. We should also repeat with him the same words, and humble ourselves before our God. At the "Communion", the Priest receives the body and blood of Christ, and then he takes the Host, and afterwards the Chalice; and let you make an act of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, and excite in yourself an ardent desire to be united to your Saviour in the Eucharist.

17. At the "Post Communion" the Priest addresses his prayers to God, to thank Him for His ineffable goodness in allowing him to participate in the Divine mysteries, and to demand of Him the grace of reaping the fruits of them. You too should unite with the Priest in making a return of gratitude to God, and praying that He may never suffer you to be separated from Him by sin. The Priest then gives the "Benediction" to the people, and while doing so let you bow down your head and receive it with devotion, as the blessing of the Church, and as the benediction of God Himself. At the conclusion of the Mass the "Last Gospel" is read, which generally is the first part of St. John's Gospel, and in saying "*and the Word was made flesh*", the Priest genuflects. We too should adore the Word of God, who, on account of His great love for us, became Man, and dwelt amongst us.

We have now, dear children, gone through the

principal parts of the Mass, in order that you may be able to "offer it to God with the Priest for the purposes for which it is said", which are, to adore God, to thank Him for His benefits, to obtain remission of our sins, and to obtain of Him every grace we stand in need of.

Q. Is meditation on Christ's sufferings a profitable way of hearing Mass?

A. Yes, it is; and should be practised in particular by those who cannot read.

18. "To meditate on Christ's sufferings" during Mass is most conducive to the interests of our souls. It is also the best and most profitable way of hearing Mass, with regard to persons who cannot read. The sufferings of Jesus Christ are a most appropriate subject for reflection during the Sacrifice of the Mass. We can, during the first part of the Mass, that is, from the commencement to the Epistle, reflect on our Saviour's agony in the garden; and when we have pondered for some time on what He suffered on that night, let us recite the first decade of the Rosary. During the second part of the Sacrifice, from the Epistle to the Offertory, let us reflect on the scourging of our Lord at the pillar, and say the second decade of our beads.

19. During the third part, that is, from the Offertory to the Consecration, let the subject of the crown of thorns pressed on the sacred head of Christ, engage our thoughts, and during this part of the Mass let the third decade be said. During the fourth part of the Mass, from the Consecration to the Agnus Dei, think on all that Christ suffered when carrying the heavy wood of the Cross on His mangled shoulders up Calvary's hill, and when you have reflected on that stage of His passion, say the fourth decade of your beads. During the fifth and last part, that is,

from the *Agnus Dei* to the last Gospel, think of what Christ must have endured when His executioners laid Him on the Cross and pierced His hands and feet with large nails, and then raised the Cross aloft; and in recollecting all this, say the fifth decade of the Rosary in honour of the Crucifixion of Christ. This method of hearing Mass cannot be too much recommended to all persons, but particularly to those who cannot read the "Prayers at Mass". Going to Communion at the conclusion of Mass is a most excellent way of hearing it. Jesus Christ desires that we should receive Him, and receive Him often, and He tells us that in Communion He will solace us in our miseries, and assist us in our difficulties: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are heavily burthened, and I will refresh you".

Q. Should we hear Mass every day?

A. Yes; it is advisable to hear Mass every day.

20. Every one who desires to live as a fervent Christian, should endeavour to hear Mass every day, if he possibly can. To neglect hearing Mass every day, and to count the hearing of daily Mass as so much lost time, argues a want of faith and a want of zeal for our salvation. From the writings of the Fathers we learn that the Christians of the early ages were so desirous of assisting at Mass, that nothing could prevent them from meeting together for that purpose. Notwithstanding the decrees of emperors—notwithstanding the rage of tyrants, the fury of enemies, the distance of place, the difficulty of assembling—their devotion to the Holy Sacrifice was so fervent and earnest, that they allowed scarcely a day to pass without hearing Mass and going to Communion. But alas! how few Christians now-a-days imitate the holy zeal and

fervent piety of the early Church! They find sufficient time for balls, parties, dances, and they think one half-hour spent at Church in the morning as so much time lost to them!†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE TWO TRADERS OF GUBBIO DROWNED, NOT HAVING HEARD MASS.

* Three traders of Gubbio went to a fair, held in the town of Cisterno, and having disposed of their goods, two of them began to speak of returning home, and arranged to start the next day at dawn, so as to arrive by evening in their own neighbourhood. But the third would not consent to start at that time, and protested that next day being Sunday, he could never think of commencing a journey without having first heard holy Mass. He said that after Mass and partaking of a little food, they might take their departure more to their satisfaction, and that—should they not succeed in getting to Gubbio that evening—there was no want of comfortable inns on the road. His companions did not yield to this wise and salutary counsel, but, bent on arriving at home that night, they answered that Almighty God would have compassion on them if they lost Mass for that once. And on Sunday morning before dawn, without ever entering the Church, they took their departure on horseback towards home. They arrived at the river Corfuone. By the continuous rain which had fallen during the night, it was excessively swollen, and the current beating strongly against the wooden bridge, had somewhat shaken and weakened it. They advanced upon it with their horses, and no sooner had they reached the middle, than a still further rise and furious rush of the flood broke down and swept away the whole structure. The two unhappy traders were, of course, plunged, with their horses, into the river and, drowned, losing at once their money, their goods, their lives, and perhaps their souls. At the sound of the crash, and sight of the havoc, the peasants ran to the spot, and contrived with hooks to draw the corpses out, which they then left stretched on the bank, in order that, if possible, they might be recognized, and obtain burial. Soon after, the third trader, who had been detained by his

desire of hearing Mass, and had then taken to the road with joyful alacrity, came up to the river, and beheld the two bodies on the bank. Drawing up to observe them, he instantly recognized his two companions, and heard from the bystanders the miserable catastrophe with the utmost agitation of spirit. Then he lifted his hands to Heaven, returning thanks to the Most High, who had so mercifully preserved him; and he blessed a thousand times the hour in which he assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, clearly recognizing the source of his safety. When he arrived home he announced the sad intelligence, got the relations to procure proper interment for the departed, and stirred up among all a lively desire of daily attending at Holy Mass.—*Lohner*.

IRREVERENCE AT MASS SIGNALLY PUNISHED.

† In a book named “*Dormisicuro*”, it is told as a well-founded story, that a woman for a long time suffering deep poverty, wandered about in a sort of despair through solitary places, and that there, in some way or other, an evil spirit intimated to her that if she would conduct herself in Church as some do, entertaining those near with idle tales and useless and impertinent talk, he would befriend her, and make her better off. The miserable woman accepted the bargain thus suggested, applied herself to the miserable and devilish work, and succeeded marvellously, for whoever happened to be placed beside her, found it impossible to attend devoutly to Mass, or any other of the Divine functions, so constant were her observations or questions, and so many and various the little methods of interruption which she made use of. But no long time passed before she felt the avenging hand of God. One morning there occurred a violent tempest, and a thunderbolt fell among the crowd, which at once slew her, and her alone. Learn, then, to avoid those who, with idle talk, and with so much irreverence in Church, make themselves truly the servants of Satan; spurn them, if you do not yourselves wish to incur the wrath of God.

THE ADVANTAGES OF HEARING MASS DAILY.

† Two artizans pursue the same trade; one is burdened with a family, wife, children, and grandchildren; the other is alone with his wife. The first has brought up his family in great comfort, and even style, and all his transactions turn out wonderfully—customers at his shop, and sales despatched. So he has gone on, till he finds himself putting by every year a good round sum, to serve in time for marriage por-

tions for his daughters. The other, who is without children, got little employment, was half famished, and was, in short, a ruined man. One day he said confidentially to his neighbour: "How is it? In your home there rains down every blessing of God; while I, poor wretch, cannot hold up my head, and all sorts of calamities light on my house?" "I will tell you", said his neighbour; "to-morrow morning, I shall be with you, and I will point out the place from which I draw so much". Next morning he took him to church to hear Mass, and then led him back to his workshop; and so two or three different times, till at last the poor man said: "If nothing else is wanted than to go to church to hear Mass, I know the way well enough, without putting you to inconvenience". "Just so", said the other; "hear holy Mass, my friend, with devotion, every day, and you will soon find a change in your circumstances". And in fact, so it was. Beginning to hear holy Mass every morning, he became well-provided with work, shortly paid his debts, and put his house once more in capital condition.—*Sar. in Vit. S. Joan. Elem.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Should we assist at Mass with great recollection?
2. How are we to acquire recollection at Mass?
3. What is necessary to be done in order to assist at Mass with piety?
4. What should be our sentiments during Mass, in order to assist at it with piety?
5. Why is outward respect required of us when hearing Mass?
6. In what consists the outward respect required at Mass?
7. What does St. Chrysostom say of those who hear Mass without respect?
8. To offer Mass with the priest, is a prayer-book recommended?
9. Into how many parts are the ceremonies of Mass divided?
10. What should we think of, and pray for, at the beginning of Mass, and at the Kyrie Eleison?
11. How should our hearts be engaged at the "Gloria", and "Dominus vobiscum"?

12. What reflections should we make during the Epistle, Gospel, and Creed?

13. For what should we pray during the Offertory and Preface?

14. For whom should we pray during the Canon of the Mass?

15. What prayers are said at the Consecration, Memento for the Dead, and Pater Noster?

16. What should be our desires and prayers from the Agnus Dei to the Post Communion?

17. What reflections are appropriate to the concluding parts of the Mass?

18. Is a meditation on Christ's Passion a profitable way of hearing Mass?

19. On what part of the Passion should we reflect during the third, fourth, and last parts of the Mass?

20. Should we endeavour to attend Mass every day?

PRACTICE.

1. Attend at Mass with the greatest attention, recollecting that Christ is about to be offered up for you.

2. During Mass, let your mind be occupied with the thought of your suffering Jesus.

3. Accompany the priest, and unite your prayers with his through the different parts of the Mass.

PRAYER.

O Divine Jesus! most worthy to be loved, we thank Thee from the very depth of our hearts, because Thou hast given Thyself to be sacrificed for us on the Altar. We thank Thee, O Lord, for the many blessings that have descended on us, through the efficacy of the Mass. We regret now our past inattention and indifference whilst assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and promise Thee to assist at it henceforward, with attention, devotion, and every outward mark of respect. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON COMMUNION.

Q. What do you mean by going to Communion?

A. Receiving the Blessed Eucharist.

1. "Going to Communion" means uniting yourselves with Jesus Christ, by "receiving the Blessed Eucharist". As our faith teaches us that the Blessed Eucharist contains really and truly Jesus Christ, whole and entire, it follows that *communicating* of it is receiving the body and blood, soul and divinity of our Divine Redeemer—the very body which had been nailed to the cross—the very blood which flowed down on Calvary to atone for the sins of all men—the very soul which, in the garden of olives, felt a mortal sadness—the very divinity which on the day of the Annunciation, became united to our human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

2. St. Chrysostom, speaking of Communion, says: "You envy the happiness of the woman mentioned in the Gospel, who touched the garment of Jesus; of Mary Magdalen, who washed His feet with her tears; . . . but you come to His Altar, you sit down at His table, you touch Him, you receive Him into your breast, you carry Him within you as Mary did". "If a great king", says St. Bernard, "came to take up his dwelling in the cottage of a poor shepherd, and conversed familiarly with him, would he not make him a return of gratitude and love? But what if this king, in order to unite himself more closely to this poor shepherd, was willing to become his very food, would not that appear a folly of love, and such

as we never see among men?" Yet this it is which Jesus does every time when we receive Him in the Blessed Eucharist. He gives us His flesh for meat, and His blood for drink. He enters into, and takes possession of us; He sanctifies our souls and bodies; He strengthens our weakness; He abideth in us, and we in Him.

Q. Is it advisable to go often to Communion?

A. It is, as nothing can conduce more to a holy life: "He that eateth this bread", says Christ, "shall live for ever"—*John*, vi. 52.

3. It is indeed true that "nothing can conduce more to a holy life than to go often to Communion". Our Divine Saviour, in instituting this Sacrament, has required of us to approach the Blessed Eucharist, and receive it under pain of spiritual death "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you"—*John*, vi. 54. These words clearly prove that we are bound to receive the Blessed Eucharist, and that if we receive it not, we shall be severely punished. All, then, who through their own fault eat not of the "flesh of the Son of Man", at least at Easter, are in the eyes of God in a state of spiritual death. But should we remain content with receiving the Blessed Eucharist at Easter time only? No, children; the intention of Jesus Christ in instituting this Sacrament, has been, that the faithful should often approach it. And one of the reasons which, probably, induced our Saviour to institute the Eucharist under the appearance of bread was to signify, by instituting it in this manner, the necessity we are under of frequently using it. Bread is the ordinary food of mankind, and so must be fre-

quently used, for, if not, we languish, and perhaps perish. The Eucharist was meant by our Saviour to be our chief spiritual food: therefore, without frequently using it, or "often going to Communion", we are in constant danger of perishing, and losing the life of the soul.*

4. In the time of the Apostles, the faithful often went to Communion, and the Table of the Lord was frequented, until the charity of Christians began to grow cold. The Fathers of the Church, in order to keep alive this primitive fervour, have always exhorted the Christians of their days "to go often to Communion". St. Augustin says: "Take this Heavenly food as often as it is of profit to you; if you derive profit from it every day, take it every day. ... So live every day that you may be worthy to receive this food every day".

5. The Fathers assembled at the Council of Trent expressed their sincere wish that the Christians of their times should, like the Christians of the early ages, participate of this Divine Mystery on the days on which they assist at Mass, not only spiritually, but also sacramentally. And the reason they assign is, because the frequent use of this Divine Sacrament is the most efficacious means they can have here below of preserving them in the life of grace, and of securing to them the life of glory. Every day's experience confirms this important truth; for we certainly know that those who communicate frequently are undoubtedly the most regular, the most fervent of all other Christians, and the most faithful in the discharge of the duties which they owe to God and to themselves.

6. Christians, in their progress through life, require three things to enable them to preserve life in the soul, and these are, food, succour, and remedies. They require food, to preserve in them the superna-

tural life of grace; succour, to protect and defend them from their visible and invisible adversaries; remedies, to cure and preserve them from their spiritual infirmities. Now, these three things are certainly contained in the Blessed Eucharist. But to produce these effects completely, it must be often received, and for these reasons: as we frequently want strength, we frequently stand in need of nourishment; as we are frequently attacked by our enemies, we frequently want help to defend us from them; and as we are frequently afflicted with the infirmities of our corrupt nature and passions, we have frequent necessity of remedies to heal them.†

7. Like a stream of water, this Sacrament extinguishes the ardour of the passions by which we are consumed. "If any of you", says St. Bernard, "do not experience such frequent or such violent emotions of anger, of envy, or of lust, let him give thanks to the Body of the Lord, which produces fruit in his soul. St. Chrysostom asserts that "when we receive the Holy Communion the devils are put to flight, and the Angels fly to our assistance".

8. Another reason that should induce us to go often to Communion, is that the Eucharist does not produce its greatest effect in any but in those who receive it often. On this account it is that we see scarcely any change in the morals of those who receive Communion only once a year, as they continue to live on in the same bad habits, vices, and irregularities. But, on the other hand, those who "go often to Communion", prove by their conduct that their lives are amended, and that they are walking with fervour in the practice of every virtue, with fidelity in the observance of God's Commandments, and that there is every reason to hope that they shall enjoy the happiness of God for ever: "He that eateth this bread", says Christ, "shall live for ever".‡

Q. How often should we go to Communion ?”

A. We should go to Communion at least once a month, and if our spiritual necessities require it, once a week.

9. The frequency of Communion is to be regulated by the fruits which this Sacrament produces in those who receive it. But as the faithful cannot with certainty judge whether they possess the necessary dispositions to participate of those fruits, they should take the advice of an enlightened and prudent confessor, who, knowing the dispositions of their hearts, may regulate the times which they are to observe in approaching the Holy Sacrament. Those who have an earnest desire of saving their souls should go to Communion at least once a month, and not allow a longer time to elapse without strengthening themselves with this spiritual food.

10. To resist the temptations of the enemy of your souls, and to keep down the passions which are most violent especially in young persons, you require strength and aid from God ; but it is particularly in Communion that God gives us this strength and aid. As a general rule, then, go to Communion once a month. Approach the Holy Table also on the principal Feast days which may occur during the month, such as Feasts of our Lord, the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph, and the Feast of your Patron Saint. These days you should never let pass without Communicating, that you may pay honour to the Feast, and obtain of God the graces that are liberally bestowed by Him on those solemn Festivals.

11. If your spiritual necessities require it—if you be violently assaulted by temptations—you should Communicate every week ; for the greatest remedy against temptations, and particularly temptations against purity, is to be found in a worthy reception of the Blessed Eucharist. “Often go to Commu-

nion", dear children, for by so doing you will advance in the friendship of God, and strengthen yourselves in virtue. The Holy Sacrament is called "the bread of Heaven", because, as earthly bread supports the life of the body, so this Heavenly bread preserves the life of the soul. "Let every Christian", says St. Liguori, "Communicate at least every eight days; but persons who lead a spiritual life, make mental prayer, and abstain from deliberate venial sins, may, with the permission of their confessor, Communicate several times in the week.

Q. How must we be prepared for Communion?

A. We must be in the state of grace, penetrated with a lively faith, animated with a firm hope, and inflamed with an ardent charity.—I. Cor., xi. 28.

12. The Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, containing, as it does, Jesus Christ, whole and entire, is of infinite value, and confers on us every Heavenly gift and favour; but to be partakers of these gifts of Heaven, our souls must be properly disposed for the reception of Jesus Christ. If the soul be properly disposed, many favours will be bestowed on those who receive Holy Communion; but if this preparation be wanting, the soul receives no benefit from this Sacrament, not because of the Sacrament—which is altogether holy—but on account of the reception of it without preparation.

13. As there is no one of the Sacraments which unites us so intimately with God as the Blessed Eucharist, so there is none for which we should prepare with so much care. The more holy a Sacrament is, the more holy should be our dispositions in receiving it. When we are about to Communicate, it is not for man, it is for God Himself that we prepare a

dwelling. The dispositions we should bring as a necessary preparation for Communion are, firstly, purity of conscience, which means "to be in the state of grace"; secondly, to be "penetrated with a lively faith"; thirdly, to be "animated with a firm hope"; and fourthly, to be "inflamed with an ardent charity".

Q. What means to be in the state of grace?

A. To be free at least from the guilt of mortal sin.

14. The Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist being a Sacrament of the living, and being given to us as spiritual food, it is required from all who are to receive it, that they should be spiritually *living*; for if they be spiritually dead, they can receive no fruit from its reception. But a spiritual life is sanctifying grace, which consists in being "free at least from the guilt of mortal sin". Sanctifying grace, which is the life of the soul, cannot exist with mortal sin, as mortal sin deprives us of this supernatural life. Without this *life*, our souls receive no benefit from Communion, but rather suffer injury from approaching the Holy Table of the Lord, because we become guilty of an additional mortal sin—the sin of sacrilege—by receiving the Author of life into the habitation of death—the Author of life into a place of darkness, and Jesus Christ into the company of devils. This it is that made St. Paul warn all communicants to *prove themselves*, that is, to examine themselves well when they approach this Holy Table, because, as he says, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself".

—I. Cor., xi. 29.

15. The soul, in order to receive Holy Communion with profit, should not only enjoy *life*, or "the state

of grace", but should also possess *health*. This *health* of the soul requires that we should be free from any affection even to venial sin, and should not be under the influence of those passions and affections which may hinder us from preparing to receive Jesus Christ worthily ; for, although those venial sins and defects do not render the communicant absolutely unworthy, or the Communion sacrilegious, yet they cause very evil effects, and diminish in a great measure the fruits which, were it not for those venial faults, the Sacrament would amply produce.

Q. How are we to be penetrated with a lively faith ?

A. By firmly believing that the Blessed Eucharist is Jesus Christ Himself, true God and true Man, His very flesh and blood with His soul and divinity.

16. The second disposition for receiving the Blessed Eucharist worthily, is faith in the Real Presence. When preparing for Communion, we should be "penetrated with a lively faith", that is, we should firmly believe that the Blessed Eucharist, which we are about to receive, "is Jesus Christ Himself, true God and true Man, His very flesh and blood, with His soul and divinity". Firstly, we must believe that the Blessed Eucharist is not merely a figure of our Saviour, but that it contains really and truly "His very flesh and blood, with His soul and divinity". Secondly, we must believe that the substance of the bread and wine is entirely changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, that the accidents, or appearances of bread and wine, remain after the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. Fourthly, that our Saviour is entire in the Host, and

in every part of the Host ; and that, by dividing the Host, we divide only the appearances, but not the body and blood of Jesus Christ ; that he who receives a part of the Host, receives as much as he who receives an entire Host.

17. This strong and lively faith of our Saviour's presence in the Blessed Eucharist is so necessary, that we may safely say that all the benefits of our Communion depend greatly on it. For this lively faith will easily produce acts of adoration, acts of hope, and acts of charity, and will make us prepare carefully to receive our Saviour in a proper manner. It was on this principle, and for this reason, that in the early ages of the Church the faithful were obliged to make acts of faith before they received Communion. Three times after the Consecration of the bread, and three times after the Consecration of the wine, all the faithful attending at Mass cried out, *Amen*. They meant by this, according to St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, to profess their belief that Jesus Christ is really present on the altar. And immediately before Communion, when the deacon cried out with a loud voice, "The Body of Christ!" the faithful again answered the seventh time, *Amen*, yes, we sincerely believe. Therefore, whoever wishes to receive worthily, should frequently make similar acts of faith, particularly in the morning, evening, and at other times of prayer, and also when they enter the Church, leave it, or pass it by.†

Q. How are we to be animated with a firm hope?

A. By having a great confidence in the goodness of Christ, who gives Himself to us without reserve in this banquet of His love.

18. The third disposition for receiving the Blessed Eucharist, is "to be animated with a firm hope". St. Augustin calls the Blessed Eucharist the Sacrament of hope; and St. Chrysostom calls it also the Sacrament of confidence. To receive from Holy Communion all its fruits, hope is no less necessary than faith. The objects of this hope are all the great and many advantages which this Sacrament procures for us when we receive it worthily; and the motives of our hope in the Blessed Eucharist are derived from the promises which our Saviour has so often and so strongly repeated in Scripture, that He would communicate life—divine life—by this Sacrament: "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever". As God has given "Himself to us without reserve in this banquet of His love"; and as He gives Himself to us whole and entire—His body and blood, soul and divinity—we should, when about to receive Him, be filled with "great confidence" in His goodness and love, and hope from the reception of the Blessed Eucharist every grace, blessing, and favour.

A. And how are we to be inflamed with an ardent charity?

A. By returning love for love to Christ, and by devoting ourselves in earnest to His service all the days of our lives.

19. The fourth disposition for receiving the Blessed Eucharist with profit to our souls, is to be inflamed with ardent charity. Charity is no less necessary than faith and hope, for the worthy reception of Jesus Christ. For although your faith were as great as that of the Apostles, and your hope equal to that of the Prophets, if charity be wanting, you are not properly disposed to entertain Him who is Charity itself, and

who cannot dwell with him who has not charity. Holy Communion is the food of the children of God; it has been instituted for them. It is then a great sacrilege for any one to receive it who is not a child of God; for, as St. Augustin tells us, it is charity that makes us children of God, and distinguishes us from children of the devil. He who loves God, is the child of God; he who loves Him not, is the child of the devil. We should, then, have "charity", or the love of God, in our hearts when we approach His Holy Table.

20. As He gives Himself to us with such great love, we should make a return to Him of "love for love". And this love to Christ must not be a false or imaginary love, but an earnest, real love, which should make us prefer Him before everything else without exception, and render us ready and willing to part with everything, and, as St. Paul expresses it, to "suffer the loss of all things", rather than to lose Him by sin. A return of true love to God, for the great love He has shown us in giving Himself to us for our food, should make us observe His commandments in all things, should make us fearful of incurring His displeasure by any mortal sin, should make us prefer His friendship before whatever is most dear to us, and should induce us to devote "ourselves in earnest to His service all the days of our lives".

Q. Is anything else required before Communion?

A. Yes; to be fasting from midnight, and we should appear very modest and humble, and clean in dress, showing in our whole exterior the greatest devotion to so holy a Sacrament.

21. In order to Communicate worthily, we should "be fasting from midnight". Although our Lord

Jesus Christ instituted the Blessed Eucharist at supper, which took place in the evening, and although He distributed it to His Apostles immediately after they had eaten of the Paschal lamb; yet it has been the practice, from the earliest ages of the Church, to receive the Holy Sacrament "fasting". This law of fasting is most rigorously enjoined, and requires of us to abstain from taking even the least thing, by way of eating or drinking, from twelve o'clock at the midnight immediately preceding Communion. It is out of respect and reverence to the Blessed Sacrament that this command of the Church is given, in order that, on the day of our Communion, this spiritual food of the soul may be the first food that we receive. But this command of "fasting from midnight" does not include those who, being in danger of death by sickness, receive the Holy Communion by way of *viam*, or immediate preparation for their passage into eternity. In this case, the Blessed Sacrament may be received at any hour of the day or night by the sick person, whether he be fasting or not.

22. Together with being "fasting from midnight", we should, before Communion, "appear very modest and humble". If at all times we should appear modest and humble, we should appear particularly so when about to receive Holy Communion. For, whom do we receive in the Holy Eucharist? God Himself, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe—Him whose power, sanctity, and perfections are infinite! Who are we that are about to receive Him? We are of ourselves but nothingness and sin. We should then "appear very modest and humble" before our God, and acknowledge, with the Centurion in the Gospel, that we are not worthy to approach Him: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof". We should adore Him with a holy fear, and prostrate ourselves humbly before Him; for

although He is hidden under the Sacramental vells, He is still the great God of Heaven and earth.

23. We should also "appear clean in dress, showing in our whole exterior the greatest devotion and reverence to so great a Sacrament", when we are about to Communicate. To approach the Blessed Sacrament dressed in a slovenly manner, with hands and face unwashed, would indeed be an irreverence to God. Would we dare to present ourselves in that state at the table of a prince of this world? Certainly not; for such an act would be considered as a very great insult to the prince. We should, then, dear children, on the morning of our Communion, dress with the greatest care, remove from our clothes anything that may appear offensive to the eye, appear in Church with neatness, and there show, "by our whole exterior, the greatest devotion and reverence to so great a Sacrament".

Q. What should we do after Communion?

A. We should spend some time in meditation and prayer, and particularly in acts of thanksgiving.

24. Having received the Sacred Host, let it remain a little while in your mouth, that it may moisten, and so more easily be received into the stomach; and when you have Communicated, "you should spend some time in meditation and prayer"; for the time which immediately follows the reception of our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist, is the most suitable time to converse with Him, to taste how sweet He is, and to embrace Him in your heart. It is the opinion of Cardinal Cajetan, that the Holy Sacrament communicates its virtues to the souls of the receivers, not only at the time of their receiving it, but also during the

time which follows, and as long as the species continues whole in the stomach. If this be so, it is a very good reason why we should continue during that time very closely recollected, spending it "in prayer and meditation". The venerable M. Avila spent two hours in prayer after Holy Communion. Father Balthasar used to say, that we ought to set as much value on the time after Communion, as if we heard from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words which He addressed to His disciples: "But you have not always Me with you". It is not a good practice to begin, as some do, to read immediately after Communion. It is better to spend at least a little time in holy affections, in speaking from the heart to Jesus Christ, who resides in your breast, or in repeating often some tender affection or prayer, meditating at the same time on His great love and mercy, in giving Himself to us in the Blessed Eucharist.†

25. "And particularly in acts of thanksgiving", should the time immediately after Communion be spent. There is no prayer more pleasing to God, or more profitable to the soul, than "acts of thanksgiving" after Communion. It is the opinion of many learned divines, that as long as the Sacramental species remain, the Holy Communion continues to produce an increase of grace, provided the soul disposes herself for it by new acts of virtue. On this account holy souls endeavour to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. Besides, God requires these "acts of thanksgiving" from us. When He rained down manna in the desert for the people of Israel, He commanded Moses to fill a golden vessel with it, and to have it preserved in the ark as an everlasting memorial of His benefit. And if God required such an acknowledgment for that perishable meat, the manna, what do we not owe Him, and what may He not exact from us, for the great gift of His

Body and Blood, which is food that will endure unto life everlasting? This gift of God is so great, that no words can sufficiently express it. Thank God, therefore, dear children, for the great favour He bestows on you, and during the whole day in which you shall have obtained this happiness, keep yourselves very reserved, and be careful not to do anything that may offend the presence of God, whose goodness has made Him condescend to make His dwelling in your hearts.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE GREAT GIFT OF HOLY COMMUNION.

Now, all that Christ our Lord is as God, all that He is as man, all that He is as God and man united—all, all is present in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist; and we receive Him in the fulness of His divinity, in the integrity of His humanity, and in the omnipotence of His graces as God and man together. The omnipotence that created the world, the omnipotence that was able to say, "Let there be light", and light was made, that Omnipotence will be in your hearts on Sunday morning when you receive Communion. The heart that was moved for the widow of Naim, the eyes that wept for the grief of Mary the sister of Lazarus, the hands that were outstretched to open the eyes of the blind and to heal the paralyzed—that heart, those eyes, those hands, those feet that were pierced upon the cross, that heart that was rent asunder—all in the thorough reality of His glorified existence will come into the heart of every man of you on Sunday morning. The graces and the merits that were brought down from Heaven by every act of His as God and man united—the merits that came of His prayer in Gethsemani, the merits that came of His last sigh upon the cross, the redemption that was effected by that death of the Lord—everything that belongs to Him as a victim and a divine victim—all, all will come to you on Sunday morning in the Holy Communion. Oh, my dear brothers, who can describe, who can imagine it? If I had the tongues of ten thousand archangels, if I had the mind of

every cherub in Heaven, I could not tell you what you are to receive when you approach Holy Communion.

Then, let Hell be opened—aye, let Hell be opened—let every devil in Hell come forth, let the princes rage and the kings of the earth storm against us and our religion, let every evil passion within us rise up—we are equal to them all, we can conquer all, we can keep our faith, preserve our hope, maintain our charity and our love of God; “for I can do all things”, says the apostle, “in Jesus Christ, who strengthens me”. Oh, therefore, don’t stay away from Him. Make it your greatest joy, your greatest glory, your constant practice, to prepare for Him, to go to Him, and to receive Him. And when the day of final resurrection comes, and the trumpet of the archangel shall resound to startle the dead in their graves with the summons: “Arise, arise, ye dead, and come to judgment”—in that day, over your graves and over mine, the shadow of a man will be cast, and that man the Man-God, Jesus Christ, and a voice will be heard speaking to us—we shall hear it in our graves and hear it in corruption, for it is written: “The dead shall hear Thy voice, O God”; and that voice will say to us what the same voice said to Lazarus of old: “Come forth”. And as the dead man that was four days dead and rotting, opened his eyes, and the first thing he saw was the face of Jesus Christ his God—even so, in virtue of the Holy Communion, His voice will speak to us, and at the sound of it our eyes will open, and the first thing we shall see will be the face of our Redeemer; “for I know”, says holy Job, “that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the flesh I shall see my Saviour”. You may ask me what proof I have of this. I will give the proof, and then I have done: “He that eateth My flesh”, says the Son of God, “and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day”.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE CONSOLATIONS OF HOLY COMMUNION.

† Again, the grace of a happy death is to be obtained by frequent and worthy reception of the Blessed Eucharist, which surpasses all other sources and means of grace in the present, and to the worthy reception of which our Lord seemed to have attached this special grace when He said: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up on the last day.” It is in the hour of death this final

grace was received, crowning and rendering eternal the fruits of all former graces, in the sanctification and beatification of the soul. Such a realization of the promise attached to frequent Communion was the holy and happy death of an old man whom I had, on one occasion, been called to attend in his last illness. After a long life spent in the faithful observance of God's law, and the regular and devout reception of the Sacraments, he lay now at the point of death, wasted by age and sickness. For some time the power of speech had left him, the film of death obscured his sight, the cold bead-drops premonitory of dissolution stood upon his brow, and his almost fleshless hands clutched and strove nervously, doing battle with the angel of death. The Priest bringing him the Viaticum entered the room, and as he lifted up the Blessed Sacrament before the dying man, a supernatural tranquillity came over him, the mist of death was dissipated, and his eyes shone out with more than natural brilliancy, fixed in ecstatic vision upon the Sacred Host; the agitated hands were folded placidly for an instant, then lifted with calm solemnity; and, the power of speech returning, the heart-tones of the grand old Celtic tongue expressed the love and holy exultation which filled his breast in that supreme moment, as with a *Caed mille faillte* he welcomed his God and Saviour; and with these beautiful words upon his lips, in the possession of Him who had promised him eternal life, he peacefully breathed forth his spirit, and went to the enjoyment of never-ending happiness!—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

ALBINUS' PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

† A little boy, named Albinus, not having yet arrived at the age required for first Communion, sighed incessantly for the happy day on which he was to receive his God, hidden under the Eucharistic veils, and he spared no pains to dispose himself for so holy an action. So lively was his horror of sin, that he dreaded even the shadow of evil. He applied himself constantly to learn all that he should know concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, and he endeavoured not only to retain well the words of his catechism, but by seeking instruction and by reflection, he endeavoured also to penetrate their meaning. The innocence of his life, the extreme desire which he expressed, and the fervour and earnestness with which he prepared himself, determined his confessor to admit him to the Holy Table at an earlier age than other children. Albinus, with lively sentiments of joy and gratitude,

thanked his confessor, and thought of nothing but of redoubling his efforts to purify his soul more and more, and of preparing it as a dwelling not unworthy of the Divine Guest who was about to visit it. Before his Communion he made a spiritual retreat and a general confession. To see the torrent of tears which he shed, and the lively sorrow of heart which he manifested, one would suppose that there was not a greater sinner upon earth. Although he had never sullied the precious robe of his Baptismal innocence by the commission of a single mortal sin, yet the light of grace which dwelt within him, made him regard his slightest faults as so many odious monsters, and caused him to grieve continually that he had been so unfortunate as to offend, even venially, a God so good and loving, whom he was now to receive as the food of his soul.

In these and similar sentiments he passed his retreat. The happy moment for which he had long sighed having at length arrived, he received the Holy Communion; but it would be impossible to describe adequately his piety and angelic demeanour on this solemn occasion. The devotion of his heart manifested itself in sighs, tears, and transports of love and gratitude. "Yes, my God", said he, "since you have been so good as to give yourself to me, I give myself entirely to you, since you have united yourself so intimately with me, nothing shall henceforth separate me from you. I should indeed be the most ungrateful of creatures if I did not consecrate my heart, without reserve, to a God who has loved me with an infinite love".

These were not the sentiments of a passing fervour, which vanish with the occasion that gives them birth. Albinus never forgot this happy day, nor the engagements which he then contracted with God. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he received, was to him a salutary nourishment, which produced in him a sensible increase of virtue and piety. Far from satisfying his hunger, this Heavenly bread served, on the contrary, but to increase it. He continued to approach the Holy Table every fortnight, knowing well that this Heavenly food is as necessary for the soul as earthly nourishment is for the body, and that it is impossible to persevere constantly in the path of innocence and piety without frequently receiving this adorable Sacrament.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is meant by the words going to Communion?
2. What do St. Chrysostom and St. Bernard say of Communion?
3. Should we often approach the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist?
4. Was Communion frequent in the early ages of the Church?
5. Has the Council of Trent recommended frequent Communion?
6. Does the Blessed Eucharist nourish our souls?
7. What effects are produced in our souls by the Blessed Eucharist?
8. Is frequent Communion necessary in order to receive its fruits?
9. How often should we approach the Blessed Sacrament?
10. Should we Communicate once a month, and on the principal Feasts?
11. Should we sometimes go to Communion every week?
12. Should we prepare ourselves before receiving the Blessed Eucharist?
13. What are the dispositions required to receive Communion with fruit?
14. Can we receive any benefit from Communion without being in the state of grace?
15. To receive all the fruits of Communion, should we be free from venial sin?
16. What do you mean by a lively faith necessary for Communion?
17. Is this lively faith very necessary in receiving Communion?
18. Why is hope a necessary disposition for Communion?
19. Should we have charity when we approach the Table of the Lord?
20. In what should our return of love to God consist?
21. Should we be fasting from midnight when going to Communion?
22. Should we approach the Holy Table with modesty and humility?
23. How should we be dressed when about to Communicate?
24. Why, in particular, should we be earnest in prayer after Communion?

25. Are acts of thanksgiving required of us immediately after Communion?

PRACTICE.

1. When preparing for Holy Communion, recollect that you are about to receive the God of Heaven and earth.

2. Immediately before Communion, let your humble and modest demeanour show forth your faith in the Blessed Sacrament.

3. When you have received Jesus Christ within your breast, make fervent acts of adoration, love, praise, and thanksgiving?

PRAYER.

O loving Jesus! most worthy to be loved, I thank Thee from the very depth of my heart, because Thou hast given me Thyself in the Blessed Eucharist. I thank Thee for the great gift of receiving Thee. O my God! what return can I make Thee for so much love? Oh, that I could make known Thy mercies through the whole world! I shall often make a return of love to Thee, by receiving Thee in the Blessed Eucharist, with a firm faith, a lively hope, and an ardent charity. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON AN UNWORTHY COMMUNION.

Q. Is it a great sin to receive unworthily?

A. Yes; whosoever receives unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eats "judgment", that is, damnation, "to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord"—*I. Cor xi 27, 29.*

1. "To receive unworthily" is, indeed, "a great sin" and a crime of the blackest nature. And it is not without reason that St. Paul speaks of an unworthy Communion in words of indignation and terror. He tells us that all who receive Jesus Christ *unworthily* are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord", that is, they are guilty of despising and offering the greatest insult to the adorable body and blood of Jesus, when they receive Him into their souls stained with mortal sin; for a soul blackened and defiled with mortal sin, is the house and dwelling of the devil. To be guilty of a man's blood is to murder him; and to be guilty of his body, seems capable of no other sense than to murder him in a cruel and barbarous manner, torturing his body by a painful and lingering death. This was the crime of the Jews in what they did to Jesus Christ; and this also, says the Apostle, is the crime of "those who receive unworthily".

2. In explaining these words of St. Paul, "Who-soever shall eat this bread, or drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord". St. Chrysostom says, that the unworthy Communicant is so denounced by St. Paul, "because he has spilt Christ's blood, and by that action has not offered a Sacrifice, but committed murder; for he who approaches unworthily the Divine Table, and receives no fruit from it, resembles those who formerly pierced the body of our Lord, not to drink, but to shed His blood"—*Hom. 27, on I. Cor. xi.* And again, in his sixtieth Homily, he says: "Think what just indignation you conceive against him who betrayed Jesus Christ, and against those who crucified Him: therefore, consider lest you also be equally guilty of the body and blood of the Son of God. It is true they killed His most sacred body; but you, after such often-repeated benefits bestowed upon you,

receive Him into an unclean and polluted soul"—*Hom.* 60.

3. We all, dear children, have, I hope, love and gratitude for Jesus Christ; we thank, and will for ever thank, Him for His many favours to us. We cannot, I am sure, ever forget what He has suffered for us. His betrayal, sorrows, and death, shall never be blotted out from our remembrance. And as often as we think of them, is it not to us a matter of the greatest wonder, that the Jews, on whom Jesus conferred so many benefits, should seize Him in the garden, bind Him to a pillar, whip and scourge His tender flesh, and after that nail Him to a Cross and rail at Him, suffering and dying? Can we call to mind these things without a feeling of loathing and horror? But you must be told, for the Scriptures and Holy Fathers declare it, that the very crime which the Jews committed when they crucified our Lord, is like to that which is committed by every one who communicates *unworthily*, by receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the state of mortal sin.

4. The Jews scourged Him, crowned Him with thorns, and crucified Him; but the unworthy Communicant does an injury more grievous, and offers an insult more reproachful to Him than all the tortures which He suffered at the hands of the Jews. And, if the Scriptures assure us, as they do, that those who return to commit a mortal sin after Baptism, "crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him", how much more do they crucify and mock Him who make an *unworthy* Communion, which is one of the most grievous and atrocious of all sins? Nay, in some respects, they are much more guilty than the Jews, for the Jews knew not what they were doing; "as if they had known it, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory"—*I. Cor.* ii. 8. But the unworthy Communicant knows

Him to be the Lord of glory, believes Him to be the Son of God, and yet insults and injures Him in so atrocious a manner!

5. You should remember also, dear children, that "receiving unworthily" is the sin of Judas. It was he who first committed it; and those who fall into it since, imitate his example, and become his disciples. Before completing his treason, Judas goes out from the Supper-table, and makes his way to the Scribes and High Priests; and when he meets them, he proposes to them the most disgraceful and abominable contract that was ever heard of. I have, he says, a kind master; but you are desirous of getting Him into your hands: what, then, will you give me if I hand Him up to you? "Thirty pieces of silver", they answered. And for "thirty pieces of silver" Jesus was sold.

6. The unworthy Communicant, by his sacrilege, in like manner, sells and betrays Jesus Christ. He does not, indeed, go out on the public way to make sale of the body and blood of Christ, but he makes a bargain, as it were, with the devil himself. Receiving Him, as Judas did, into a guilty soul, he betrays Him, not indeed to the Jews, but what is worse, to the devil who dwells in him. What punishment should we not deserve for so frightful a crime? Let us, too, remember, dear children, that when Judas, at the Last Supper, received the body and blood of Jesus Christ unworthily, he was at once possessed by the devil, and in despair he tied a cord around his neck, and hanged himself from a tree, and his entrails burst out and fell on the road-side. This example should be a warning to us against the commission of so great a crime as "receiving unworthily", and should fill us with alarm, lest we should receive God in the state of sin, and so "receiving Him unworthily", be sharers of the punishment of Judas.*

7. "Receiving unworthily" is productive of the most disastrous consequences. The death of the soul, which it infallibly brings on, is the first evil following from it. From this death of the soul follow other most dismal effects; such as the falling into new sins, spiritual blindness, vices increased, passions strengthened, the soul every day groaning under her heavy burden, and feeling herself drawn away, more and more, from God. If those who persecuted Jesus Christ, without knowing what they were doing, are punished so severely, what ought not Christians to expect when they knowingly treat Him with such contempt in His own Person?

8. Ecclesiastical history is full of examples of the many punishments which God has inflicted upon this detestable sin. In His first Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul attributes as the effect of unworthy Communions, the great number of distempers and deaths with which the Corinthians were afflicted. St. Cyprian tells us that "in his time, there were many whose bodies were possessed by the devil for having communicated unworthily; and also that many had lost their senses, and became distracted and insane, upon the same account"—*St. Cyprian, de Lapsis*; and St. Chrysostom assures us, that the same thing happened in his time. St. Cyprian also tells, that "a Christian woman, having partaken in private of the sacrifice of idols, and coming not long after to Communicate with the Christians, had no sooner received the Son of God, than her pain and agony were such as if she had taken poison, and that she immediately expired upon the spot". These examples, dear children, should make every one reflect, that if the unworthy Communicant has not yet received the same punishment for his sacrilege, he has, however, deserved it as much as those of whom the Saints speak. Let each of us consider not so

much the punishment which another has received, as what he himself has deserved ; and let him not suppose that he will meet with no chastisement for the sacrilege, because punishment is delayed. He should rather be alarmed, lest God, in His justice, should defer the punishment to a more distant time, and thus render it lasting for an eternity.†

Q. What do you mean by receiving unworthily?

A. To receive the Blessed Eucharist in the state of mortal sin.

9. "Receiving unworthily" means "receiving the Blessed Eucharist in the state of mortal sin". If we have committed mortal sin, though one only ; and without receiving the Sacrament of Penance for the remission of that sin, should approach the Table of the Lord, and receive the body and blood of Christ, our Communion would be an unworthy one. Even to preserve an affection for one only mortal sin, at the time of Communion, would render us guilty of profaning the body and blood of Jesus Christ. To receive Communion in the state of venial sin, is not "receiving unworthily", or profaning the body and blood of Jesus Christ ; for although venial sins, committed about the time of receiving Communion, have a special malignity attached to them, on account of their being committed at that particular time, it is only mortal sin which renders our Communion sacrilegious. You should conceive a great horror, therefore, dear children, of "receiving unworthily", and tremble at the thought of receiving God into your breasts "in a state of mortal sin".

10. The consequences of receiving God "in the state of mortal sin" are sad and deplorable. St.

John Chrysostom, in his Homily on the first Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, tells us, that God often delivered up to Satan those Christians who approached the Sacred Mysteries unworthily, and he attributed to unworthy communions the many evils which occurred so frequently in his time. To those who used to say that a sacrilegious Communion only once a year could not bring down from Heaven such weighty calamities, he made answer, that though Judas betrayed his Master only once, and that although the Jews crucified Jesus but once, yet they were not, on that account, exempt from punishment, for the most dreadful calamities were showered down on them on account of their sacrilegious crimes.

11. Receiving Jesus Christ "in the state of mortal sin" hardens us in guilt. It is told, that at one time a brigand leader had among his followers a young man who appeared very reluctant in doing anything forbidden by the laws of God, and was altogether opposed to violence and bloodshed. "Go", said the brigand chief to him, "receive unworthily, and your fear and timidity will disappear". The young man followed this evil counsel, and became soon the boldest and most unscrupulous of the band. We are told, also, that Voltaire said to one of his associates, in order to confirm him in impiety: "Go, communicate once or twice without having gone to confession, and you shall no longer fear".

12. "To receive the Blessed Eucharist in the state of mortal sin", frequently leads to despair, as we find from the examples of Judas and others, of whom ecclesiastical history makes mention. We are told, on credible authority, that one who during life was very inattentive to the duties of religion, when dying was visited by a Priest. The sick man confessed his sins, and, a day or two after, the *Viaticum* was carried to his house. At the moment when the Priest,

holding the Host in his fingers, was about laying it on the tongue of the dying man, he cried out: "Hold! Father, hold! I have never made but one Communion in my life, and that Communion has been a sacrilegious one—I am damned!" And crying out thus, in despairing accents, he expired. And so it is, that blindness of mind, hardness of heart, despair, and final impenitence, are the ordinary fruits and sad consequences of "receiving the Blessed Eucharist in the state of mortal sin". We must not, however, conclude from this, that a person who has made an unworthy Communion should despair of his salvation. God forbid. How great soever his crimes may have been, he has a remedy, for the mercy of God is infinite; and if he has recourse to it with an humble and contrite heart, he will not be rejected—His mercy and His Precious Blood, which he has profaned, can yet purify him.†

Q. What should a person do, if he be in mortal sin, before Communion?

A. He must obtain pardon in the Sacrament of Penance.

13. If a person "be in mortal sin before Communion", it will not be sufficient that he should make an Act of Contrition for that sin before Communion; there is required something more, and that is, going to Confession, in order to "obtain pardon in the Sacrament of Penance". The Christian who is preparing for Communion, should, as St. Paul teaches, *prove himself*;* and if, after a diligent examination of his conscience, he feels conscious of incurring the guilt of mortal sin, he is strictly bound, except in

* "Probet autem seipsum homo: et sic de pane illo edat, et de calice bibat"—I. Cor. xi. 28.

some very particular but very rare cases, to have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance, in order to be cleansed from his sin ; for, however contrite he may feel, he should not receive the Holy Communion before having received absolution from that sin in the Sacrament of Penance. Such has been the doctrine taught by the Council of Trent.* Whoever, therefore, feels his conscience burdened with the guilt of mortal sin, should at once excite contrition in his heart, and go to Confession before he Communicates.

14. If we be already at the Table of the Lord with others, and just about to receive the Blessed Eucharist, and should at that time recollect a mortal sin forgotten in our last Confession, we are not required to arise from our knees, and seek a Priest, in order to receive absolution anew, lest those around us should be scandalized. The sin forgotten had been remitted with the others ; and lest any scandal to others, or any injury to the character of the communicant might follow, if he arose and moved away from the communion-rails, all that is required from a person so circumstanced, is to make an act of contrition, and to form the resolution of confessing the forgotten sin in his next Confession.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE FATE OF JUDAS.

* The holy Scriptures furnish an awful example of the effects

* “*Ecclesiastica autem consuetudo declarat, eam probationem necessariam esse, ut nullus sibi conscius mortalis peccati, quantumvis sibi contritus videatur, absque præmissa sacramentali confessione, ad sacram Eucharistiam accedere debeat*”—*Conc. Trid. sess. xiii. cap. viii.*

of an unworthy Communion, in the person of Judas, who had the wickedness to receive our Lord, though his soul was sullied with the crime of avarice, and his mind full of the dark project of betraying Him. No sooner had he Communicated than Satan entered into him; he sold his good Master, and delivered Him to His enemies; nor could the embrace of the Son of God, nor the sweet name of friend, by which He addressed him, soften his savage heart. But what was the end of this monster—the just object of eternal execration? He fell into despair, became his own executioner, and, having hanged himself, his bowels gushed out, and his unhappy soul descended into hell, where it has been for upwards of eighteen hundred years; and, alas! all these years are not even a moment compared with that long eternity during which he is to remain in that place of torments!

THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT.

† A very wealthy man, and also a man enjoying a very high position in life, had been guilty during life of many crimes, and had more than once made sacrilegious Communions. At last he fell dangerously ill, and feared the end of his life was at hand. The recollection of his many sacrilegious Communions affrighted his soul, and tormented him night and day. His conscience was like a worm eating his heart. He was raging in a continual fever of excitement. His family and friends dare not approach him, and all the aids of religion he rejected with disdain. In one of his paroxysms of agony, he thought he saw his bed-room door open, and the devil entering his apartment, who, looking at him for some time, addressed him in these words: "As you have often up to this communicated unworthily, you shall receive to-day Communion at my hands". Immediately the unfortunate man, his heart filled with despair, shouted out that the vengeance of God had fallen on him. His hair stood erect, he gnashed his teeth, he madly calls on the devils to take him away. "What o'clock is it?" he asks, in accents of fear. He is told it is eleven. "Eleven o'clock!" he mutters, and he becomes frightfully convulsed. In about an hour he becomes quiet, and again asks in tremulous tones: "What o'clock is it?" "Twelve", he is told. In a moment he cries out, in accents of terror: "Ah! now begins my dreadful eternity. I am burning! I am burning!" And saying these words, he died.

THE SACRILEGE OF PELAGIUS.

† In the chronicles of St. Benedict it is related of a certain hermit, that, being intrusted by his parents with the care of sheep, he led a life so exemplary that all called him a Saint. He lived in this manner many years. After the death of his parents, he sold the little property which they had left him, and retired into a hermitage. He unfortunately consented once to an unchaste thought. After this sin he became very melancholy, but would not confess it, lest he should lose the good opinion of his Confessor. While he was in this state of melancholy, a pilgrim who passed by said to him: "Pelagius, confess your sin: God will pardon you, and your peace shall be restored". The pilgrim then disappeared. After this, Pelagius resolved to do penance for his sin, but not to confess it, flattering himself that God would pardon him without Confession. He entered into a monastery, in which he was received on account of his reputation for sanctity, and there led an austere life, in the practice of fasting and penitential works. Death came: he made his last Confession; but, as he had always through shame concealed the sin during life, so he also concealed it at death. He received the viaticum, died, and was buried with the reputation of a Saint. On the following night the body of Pelagius was found on the surface of the ground. It was again buried. On the second and third nights the same remarkable circumstance occurred. On a close examination of the body, it was found that the consecrated particle which he had received as *viaticum* still remained in his mouth!

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Do we offend God grievously by receiving His body and blood unworthily?
2. What does St. Chrysostom say in reference to the words of St. Paul?
3. Is the unworthy Communicant equally as ungrateful and guilty as the Jews?
4. How is the unworthy Communicant even more guilty than the Jews?
5. In what manner did Judas betray our Lord?
6. In what way does the unworthy Communicant resemble Judas?
7. What evil consequences follow from receiving Jesus Christ unworthily?
8. Can you give any examples of the frightful consequences of an unworthy Communion?
9. What is meant by receiving the Blessed Eucharist unworthily?
10. What does St. John Chrysostom say of unworthy Communicants?
11. Can you give any examples proving that an unworthy Communion hardens the heart?
12. Give one or two examples proving that an unworthy Communion leads to despair.
13. If we be in mortal sin, is an act of Contrition sufficient before we receive Communion?
14. What should we do if we recollect a mortal sin, not already told, when we are just about to receive Communion?

PRACTICE.

1. Never forget that receiving unworthily is one of the greatest crimes of which you can be guilty.
2. Remember that the first person who made an unworthy Communion was Judas, who afterwards hanged himself.
3. Whenever you are about to communicate, carefully examine the state of your soul, and if it be stained with mortal sin, confess that sin before receiving.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! how can we sufficiently return Thee thanks

for having given Thyself to us in the Blessed Eucharist ! If ever we had the misfortune of receiving Thee unworthily, we now sincerely regret our sin ; for we know that it is a crime which saddens Thy loving heart, and which renders us like unto the ungrateful Jews and the traitor Judas. Lord, permit not that we should ever receive Thy body and blood in the state of mortal sin ; never allow us to become Thy betrayers, like Judas, and to crucify Thee again, like the Jews. We now firmly resolve never to receive Thy flesh and blood without having carefully examined the state of our soul, and washed away its defilements in the tribunal of Penance. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

Q. What is Penance ?

A. A Sacrament by which the sins are forgiven which are committed after Baptism.

1. Penance, in general, may mean the regret we feel for having done anything, whether that thing be good or evil. But, in a strict sense, Penance is to be considered as a virtue and as a Sacrament. Penance, as a virtue, prompts us to feel interior sorrow for having offended God by our sins, to detest them, to resolve to commit sin no more, and to punish ourselves for them, in order to satisfy God's justice, whom we have offended by those sins. "Penance", as a Sacrament, is one of the seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, "by which the sins are forgiven which are committed after Baptism".

2. "Penance" is called a "Sacrament", because it has all the things required to make it a Sacrament, which are : "a visible sign", permanently "instituted

by Jesus Christ", and "productive of grace". In Penance there is, first, the "visible or outward sign", which consists in the three acts of the penitent—Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction—and which are *as the matter* of this Sacrament; and also there are the *words of absolution* pronounced by the Priest, and which are *the form* of the Sacrament. The three acts of the penitent being outwardly expressed, or, in some way, outwardly made known, are properly taken to signify an outward change of heart; and the words of absolution—*Ego te absolvo*—determine those acts more clearly to this signification. But when there is on one side a declaration of sin united with *external* grief, and, on the other side, an *external* sentence of a judge loosing or binding, certainly there must be found a *visible sign*.

3. There is, in the second place, the *permanent institution by Jesus Christ*—"a visible sign, instituted" by Him. It was Christ who instituted the Sacrament of Penance, and gave the power of administering it to the Apostles, when He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained". Now, by these words Christ did not mean to confine the power of forgiving and retaining sins to the Apostles, but meant that the power should extend to their successors, and be continued in the Church throughout all ages. Hence it is that the Church believed that she had this power from Christ, and so exercised it at all times, from the days of the Apostles down to ours.

4. There is, thirdly, the "inward grace", that is, the remission of the guilt of sin. This "inward grace", or pardon of sin, Christ promises in these words, addressed to the Apostles and their successors—the Bishops and Priests: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you

shall retain, they are retained"—*John*, xx. 23. Therefore, when the Priest pronounces absolution over a penitent sinner, God ratifies the sentence, and gives "inward grace" to the soul; for no one ever was, or ever could be, released from the guilt of sin, and reconciled to God, but by "inward grace".

5. Penance is a "Sacrament by which the sins are forgiven which are committed after Baptism". By Penance, the sins committed before Baptism are not forgiven, because it is the Sacrament of Baptism that effaces not only original sin, but also all the other sins committed before Baptism. Penance washes away only the sins which we commit after we are baptized; for we become not children of the Church until after Baptism; and on that account the Church cannot administer Penance to us before Baptism.

6. All sins "committed after Baptism", no matter what may be the extent of their enormity, are forgiven by Penance, for the power given to the pastors of the Church of forgiving sins, extends to all sins whatsoever. When Jesus Christ gave this power to His Church, He made no exception, no reserve of any sin whatsoever. And God Himself declares by the Prophet Ezechiel, "But if the wicked man will do Penance for all his sins . . . and keep My Commandments, living, he shall live, and shall not die. . . . I shall never think any more of *all the iniquities* he has been guilty of"—*Ezechiel*, xviii. 21, 22. Hence the Catholic Church at all times promised and granted pardon to all sinners, no matter how enormous their crimes had been, who sincerely repented of their sins. In the Scriptures there are certainly some expressions which may lead one to infer that there are sins that cannot be forgiven by Penance; but all that can be concluded from such words is, that there are some sins for which it is extremely difficult to obtain pardon, because persons

guilty of such sins despise the grace of God, by which alone they can be converted and saved.*

Q What is the matter of the Sacrament of Penance ?

A. The remote matter are the sins of the penitent, and the proximate matter the acts of the penitent.

7. In the Sacrament of Penance there are, according to divines, *remote* matter, and *proximate* or *immediate* matter. The sins of the penitent constitute the remote matter. Mortal sins are the remote matter, and venial sins are a sufficient matter. Mortal sins are called the *necessary* matter, because the Sacrament of Penance was principally instituted to efface mortal sin. Venial sins cannot be called a *necessary*, though they are a *sufficient* matter for the Sacrament, because, according to the Council of Trent, there are several other ways of effacing venial sins besides the Sacrament of Penance. But the same Council tells us that it is both good and useful to confess our venial sins ; and, indeed, according to the opinion of Saints and Divines, any one who would entirely neglect confessing his venial sins, would evidently expose his soul to the most imminent danger of damnation.

8. The contrition, confession, and satisfaction of the penitent constitute the *immediate* matter of the Sacrament of Penance. For, as Penance was instituted by our Saviour as a tribunal of reconciliation, to reconcile sinners to God, it is a necessary consequence of this institution—firstly, that the criminal must acknowledge his sins, and be sorry for them ; secondly, that he must confess them ; thirdly, that he must promise to give or make satisfaction for his sins ; and lastly, that the judge who pardons the sins should pronounce sentence. All this is done by the contrition, confession, and satisfaction of the peni-

tent, to which the Priest, as judge, adds the Absolution. Hence, the contrition, confession, and satisfaction of the penitent are justly deemed the essential parts of the Sacrament.

Q. By whose power are sins forgiven?

A. By the power of God, which Christ left to the pastors of His Church.

9. All sins are forgiven by "the power of God", for it is by an omnipotent power alone that they can be pardoned. But God has not reserved this power to Himself, but has communicated it "to the pastors of His Church". God remits sins by an absolute, sovereign, and independent authority: "The pastors of His Church" remit sins by a subordinate and dependent authority, which they have received from God. Priests, as ministers of God, and in His name, communicate sanctifying grace to men. This grace effaces their sins, re-establishes them in God's friendship, and in all the other privileges which they had lost by sin. This doctrine the Catholic Church always believed and taught, from the time of the Apostles down to our days, and condemned as Heretics the Novatians and others who asserted that God reserved to Himself the power of forgiving some sins.

10. St. Pacian, speaking on this subject, says:—"You may say that God alone can pardon the penitent sinner. True; but whatever God does by His Priests, that is the power of God. For why should He say to the Apostles, 'Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven', if He did not really give them the power to loose or bind? Should you say that He gave this power to the Apostles alone, and not to their successors? Then He likewise gave the Apostles alone the power of

baptizing, the power of confirming, and to nobody else. But we know that they transmitted these powers to their successors in the ministry. If, therefore, the power of baptizing and confirming were transmitted down from the Apostles to their successors, so must the power of forgiving sins”.

11. St. John Chrysostom, one of the greatest lights of the Church, and who lived in the fifth century, writing on these words of our Lord—“Whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven”, says: “To the Priests is given a power which God would not give to the Angels or Archangels; for to these it was not said, ‘whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven’. Earthly princes have, indeed, the power of binding, but their power reaches no further than the body; but the power of Priests reaches even to the soul, and ascends to the Heavens, insomuch that what the Priests do below, God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of His servants”—*On the Priesthood*, b. 3. Similar is the language of St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustin, St. Leo, and of the Holy Fathers in all ages; and that doctrine is confirmed by the constant and uninterrupted belief and practice of the Christian world.

Q. When did Christ leave to the pastors of His Church the power of forgiving sins?

A. Chiefly when He said to His Apostles: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained”—*John*, xx. 22, 23.

12. Christ left "to the pastors of His Church the power of forgiving sins", when He addressed them, in the persons of the Apostles, in these words: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven"—*Matt.* xviii. 18. But He left them this power chiefly when He said to the Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained"—*John*, xx. 22, 23. By these words you clearly see, dear children, that Christ gave to His Apostles, and their successors—"the pastors of His Church"—a power to *remit* and *retain* the sins of the faithful. And these words also show, that the power here given to the pastors of God's Church is a judicial power, by which they are appointed judges of our souls in regard to our sins, and authorized both to forgive and not forgive, to loose and not to loose, the bonds of sin, according to the merits of the case and the dispositions of the penitents—that is, to pronounce such a judgment as may be approved by God and confirmed in Heaven. But this must be by *remitting*, when the sinner is truly penitent; and by *retaining*, when he is unworthy of forgiveness.

Q. What must we do to obtain pardon of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance?

A. We must make a good Confession.

13. "To obtain pardon of our sins, we must make a good Confession"; for, a good Confession is strictly enjoined by Almighty God, and is appointed by Him as the *ordinary* means of obtaining pardon of our grievous transgressions. Confession is a declaration and accusation which a sinner makes of his

sins to a Priest—who has jurisdiction in reference to them—in order to obtain pardon of them, through the power of the keys, which Jesus Christ granted to His Church. “Confession”, or this sincere declaration of our sins to a Priest, in order to receive absolution, is ordained by Jesus Christ as a condition absolutely necessary to obtain pardon of our grievous sins; so much so, that without it, either actually or in desire, the grace of the Sacrament of Penance, by which our sins are pardoned, will not be bestowed upon us. †

Q. Are the faithful obliged by God’s command to confess their sins to His Priests?

A. Yes; for without Confession pardon of mortal sin, *ordinarily*, cannot be obtained.

14.. We have seen in the question immediately preceding, that Christ instituted the “pastors of His Church” the ministers of the Sacrament of Penance, and that the power given to them is a judicial power; therefore, it follows that it is His will that they should administer it, but administer it by pronouncing a just sentence. But how can the “pastors of the Church” administer the Sacrament of Penance, and pronounce a just sentence, unless the penitents make known their sins to them, truly state their case, and disclose the dispositions of their hearts. Therefore, since, by God’s appointment, the “pastors of His Church” are made the judges of our souls, by the same appointment they are to know what they are to judge. For a Priest as a judge cannot pass sentence in a case if he knows not that case; but he cannot know it except by the Confession of the penitent, becoming his own accuser, and laying open the secrets of his conscience to him. It is, therefore, a matter of certainty, that God wills and appoints that peni-

penitents should confess their sins, and open the true state of their conscience "to the pastors of His Church", that they may form a right judgment, and according to that judgment, *forgive or retain* the sins of the penitents.

Q. Can you give any other texts from Scripture in proof of the necessity of confessing our sins?

A. Yes; the words of St. John and St. James clearly prove the necessity of confessing our sins.

15. St. John says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity"—*John*, i. 8. Here we see, in the most express terms, the Confession of our sins declared to be the condition of our obtaining forgiveness of them: "If we confess them, God will forgive them"; and, on the contrary, if we do not confess them, but conceal them, and "say we have no sin, we only deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". This testimony is so strong and clear for the necessity of confessing our sins, that those who deny the necessity of Confession, have no other way to escape the force of it, but by vainly pretending that the Apostle means only the confessing of our sins privately to God alone. But that this cannot be the Apostle's meaning is evident, for two strong reasons; first, because *the confessing of our sins* is here put in opposition to the *saying we have no sin*: these two are opposite one to the other, and therefore must certainly relate to the same object. Now who is there in his senses that would seriously dare to say to God in private that he *has no sin*? In this part of the sentence, then, the Apostle certainly means saying, "*we have no sin before men*"; and, consequently, in the other

part of it, when he says: "If we confess our sins" he necessarily means the doing so *before men also*.

16. Besides, the Apostle here declares, that if we confess our sins, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins". How come the fidelity and justice of God to be engaged here? Has He anywhere engaged His promise to pardon those who confess their sins to Him alone in private? David, indeed, says, "I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sins" (*Ps.* xxxi. 5), which shows that, in the Old Law, when a sinner, "with a broken and contrite heart", that is, with *perfect repentance* of his sins, returned to God, and acknowledged his guilt with sorrow, God, of His infinite goodness, would show mercy to such a repentant sinner. But we do not read anywhere that God ever engaged His fidelity or justice to forgive the sins of any who confessed them in private to Him alone; consequently, in the above text, the Apostle cannot mean the confessing to God alone; for, from what we have seen above, it is manifest that God has solemnly engaged His fidelity and justice in the matter of forgiving the sins of those who confess them "to the pastors of His Church" in the Sacrament of Penance, when He declares to these pastors, "whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven". The effects of this promise cannot be obtained, as we have already seen, unless the sinner confess his sins to the pastor: and when he does that with the proper dispositions, then this sacred promise of Jesus Christ engages Him, in fidelity and justice, to grant the wished-for pardon. We must, therefore, conclude, that when the Apostle says, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins", his meaning most certainly is, if we confess them *sacramentally*. ‡

17. St. James says, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved"—*James*, v. 16. Here we see, in express terms, the *confessing our sins to man* laid down as a condition of salvation. The only difficulty in this text is the meaning of the words *one another*, which seem to imply the necessity of every one's confessing publicly to each other, whether to Priest or not. But this difficulty will easily disappear, if we reflect that sacramental Confession does not necessarily require that it should be made in private; for, in the primitive ages, and even in the Apostles' time, Confession was sometimes made in public before the whole people. Thus we read, that "many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds"—*Acts*, xix. 18. But whether in public or private, Confession was always considered as of necessary obligation, in order to obtain forgiveness of sins by the absolution of the Priest. As both ways were then practised, St. James uses the above expression, of "confessing one to another", as including both; but declares that the Confession made to a Priest—whether to him alone in private, or in presence of others who did the same, confessing in public, "one to another"—is a necessary condition of salvation.

Q. Is Sacramental Confession of any other advantage besides its being a necessary means of getting our sins pardoned?

A. Yes, many other advantages flow from it.

18. Besides being a necessary means of salvation, Confession is of the greatest advantage both to the penitent himself and to society; for, with regard to the penitent, it serves to discharge a part of the debt of temporal punishment due to his sins, and it de-

livers him from that dreadful confusion which he would have to undergo at the day of judgment; and which, beginning then, would last for all eternity, as one of the greatest torments of Hell. It procures him many useful instructions, counsels, directions, and exhortations, for the advancement of his soul in a life of virtue and piety. It is also a source of immense comfort and consolation to the poor soul in all her afflictions, especially in such as arise about her spiritual concerns. It affords an incredible ease and peace to the soul, when oppressed with the stings of a guilty conscience, for it is to be observed that, although Confession be a very heavy burden upon flesh and blood, and perfectly inimical to self-love, yet when a soul is once touched with a sense of the evil of sin, and when conscience is awaked on that account, Confession is the only resource that nature itself points out to obtain ease and comfort; so much so, that a great many examples are seen of those who, being troubled in conscience, but not being members of the Catholic Church, do not consider Confession as a duty required by God, yet fly to some friend in whom they can confide, and sometimes even to Catholic Priests themselves—on whose secrecy they can better depend—and lay open their souls to them for advice and consolation. With regard to the state and society, how many evils are remedied in Confession, which the laws of man could never rectify? Losses are made up; injuries are pardoned, and reparation made for them; ill-gotten goods are restored; those at enmity reconciled; peace restored; unjust contracts dissolved; scandals removed, and many other benefits procured, which are of the highest advantage to society. §

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE REPENTANCE OF THE INHABITANTS OF NEOCESAREA.

* A solemn feast was celebrated once every year in the city of Neocesarea, in honour of one of their false gods, and on that occasion the people, both of the city and the surrounding country, assembled in large numbers to take part in the festival. In one year, in particular, the theatre was crowded almost to suffocation, and the noise and confusion became so great, that neither the musicians nor the actors could be heard. Then the dense throng cried out, as it were with one voice: "Jupiter, make room for us". St. Gregory having heard of the occurrence, sent word to those assembled that very soon they would have space and room enough, even more than they should desire. And at once the plague, which had made its appearance some time before in the city, seized on a great number of those within the theatre, and the singing and dancing were soon changed into lamentation and mourning. The plague, like a fire, spread from house to house, and seized on its victims. The temples were soon crowded with the infected, who repaired to them to implore the assistance of their false gods. No assistance came, and the pavements were soon strewn with corpses. A great many infected, of themselves entered the sepulchres, as the living were insufficient to bury the dead. Every one understood the cause of the terrible calamity; they knew that the devil, whom they invoked, fulfilled their wishes. In this extremity they had recourse to St. Gregory, and conjured him to arrest the terrible scourge by the power of that God whom he preached, and whom they now acknowledged to be the true God. Whenever the fatal scourge entered a house, they entreated the Bishop to come, visit, and offer up his prayers in that house. The prayer of the Saint was not without its fruits. The plague soon ceased, and St. Gregory, who had found only seventeen Christians when he took possession of the See of that city, had the consolation, when dying, to know that there were only seventeen Pagans living in it.—*St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his life of St. Gregory Thaum.*

THE BISHOP OF AMIENS, AND HIS PREPARATION FOR
CONFESSION.

† Monseigneur de La Mothe d'Orleans, Bishop of Amiens, confessed every eight days. When preparing for Confession

he placed himself in spirit in Hell, in Heaven, and on Calvary. He entered first in thought into the prison of the damned, and imagined he saw there the place to which he feared he had deserved to be consigned, in the midst of devouring and eternal fire, in the society of the reprobate. He then thanked God for having hitherto preserved him from falling into this terrific abode; begged of Him to show him mercy; and prayed for all the graces that were necessary for his perseverance in virtue. He then entered into the abode of the blessed—the dwelling-place of glory and happiness—and wept to think that by sin he had closed its gates; he begged of the Lord to open them to him, and invoked the Blessed Virgin and the Saints to assist him by their intercession, that he might obtain a share in the happiness they possess, and of that glory with which they are crowned. He afterwards went in spirit to Mount Calvary, and reflecting devoutly and attentively on all our Blessed Lord had suffered, said, “Behold my work! I am the cause of those sorrows which my Lord has endured; my sins, with those of other sinners, have covered the body of the Man-God with wounds and blood, and have nailed Him to the Cross. O good Jesus! how have I been capable of treating Thee so cruelly, who art deserving of infinite love! Thou, O dearest Redeemer, art infinitely good; shall I not, therefore, love Thee with all my strength? Yes, Lord, I love Thee with my whole heart; and I bitterly regret that I have ever offended Thee!” What happy fruits should we not derive from our confessions; what progress should we not make in the way of God, did we follow the method of this virtuous prelate!

THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE PENITENT.

† A man who had been a very grievous sinner, went to Confession to the Venerable Archbishop of Sens, Pierre de Gorbeil. He made a full confession of all his sins; and during the recital, which was frequently interrupted by sobs and groans, he asked, with a torrent of tears, if it were possible that such an infamous sinner could be forgiven. The Bishop told him not to doubt of God’s mercy, provided he was sincerely desirous of doing penance for his sins. “What”, said the penitent, “will God be satisfied with anything that I can do, who have offended him so grievously? Tell me what to do; lay upon me any penance; but is it possible to impose any that can bear the slightest proportion to the heinousness

of my sins?" The holy Bishop shed tears of joy at hearing such expressions of compunction, and said to him, "Your penance shall be only for seven years". "My father", replied the penitent, "only seven years! Alas! the longest life would not suffice to atone for the greatness of my offences". "It shall be even less, my child", said the Archbishop; "you shall do no more than fast for three days on bread and water". "O my father, is this possible?" said the penitent, as he shed tears, and humbly struck his breast; "do not let me perish; do not humour my weakness; but let my punishment bear some proportion to my sins; for indeed I am ready to do all I can to atone for my past life". The Bishop, lifting up his heart in gratitude to God, who had inspired such dispositions, told the penitent that he need do nothing more but say one "Our Father", and assured him of the Divine forgiveness. At that moment the heart of the penitent, overcome with grief for his sins, and with thankfulness to God for His mercies, broke from the very violence of its emotions, and he fell dead at the feet of his confessor, expiring whilst making the very act of contrition by which he obtained pardon from God, and, we may well believe, an immediate entrance into Heaven.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by Penance as a virtue, and by Penance as a Sacrament?
2. How do you prove that Penance is a Sacrament?
3. How do you prove that Penance was instituted by Jesus Christ?
4. Can you prove that Penance produces inward grace?
5. Are all sins remitted by the Sacrament of Penance?
6. Can all sins committed after Baptism be remitted by Penance?
7. What constitutes the remote matter of the Sacrament of Penance?
8. What constitutes the proximate matter of the Sacrament of Penance?
9. Can any one but God forgive sins?
10. What says St. Pacian on the power of forgiving sins?
11. What says St. John Chrysostom on the power of the Priesthood?

12. At what particular time did Christ give Priests the power of forgiving sins?

13. What is it we must do to obtain pardon of our sins?

14. How do you show that the faithful are obliged to confess their sins to the Priest?

15. Can you prove the necessity of confessing our sins from the words of St. John?

16. Has God promised to forgive the sins of those who confess them?

17. Can you prove the necessity of confessing our sins from the words of St. James?

18. Does Confession confer any other benefit besides the forgiveness of sins?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever remember the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance, as without it a sinner cannot, ordinarily, obtain pardon of his sins.

2. Thank God for His mercy, in giving the power of forgiving sins to the Priests of His Church?

3. Always present yourselves at the tribunal of Penance when your conscience is burdened with mortal sin.

PRAYER.

"What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has rendered to me?" I owe Thee, O God! all that I have and all that I am. I am indebted to Thee for my life, because it is Thou alone who preservest me. But what return shall I make Thee for having so often saved me from Hell? I have often sinned against Thee, and transgressed Thy sacred laws; but when I returned to Thee, and approached the Sacrament of Penance, my grievous crimes had been all pardoned by Thee, through the ministry of the Priests of Thy Church. I thank Thee, Lord, for Thy goodness in instituting the Sacrament of Penance, by which all my sins are blotted out. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON CONFESSION AND CONTRITION.

Q. What is the best method to prepare for a good Confession ?

A. First, earnestly beg of God the grace to make a good Confession ; secondly, to examine ourselves carefully on the Commandments of God and of His Church, on the Seven Deadly Sins, and particularly on our predominant passions, and the duties of our stations in life, that we may know in what and how often we have sinned in thought, word, deed, or omission ; thirdly, to make Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity ; and, fourthly, to excite ourselves to a sincere contrition for our sins.

1. "The best method to prepare for a good Confession", is, in the first place, "earnestly to beg of God the grace to make a good Confession", begging light and grace of Almighty God to know and recollect our sins, for we are apt to judge partially of ourselves. Self-love, and our other passions, many times blind us, and make us overlook several faults in ourselves, which, perhaps, we can easily enough see in other persons. But let me tell you, that such faults never escape the knowledge of God, who perfectly sees and comprehends every thought of our mind and motion of our heart. This made St. Paul say, that, though he was not conscious to himself of any guilt, yet he durst not, for all that, pronounce himself justified ; "because", says he, "it is God

must judge me". Whenever, therefore, you are about to prepare yourselves for Confession, be sure never to omit, by some short prayer at least, begging of Almighty God that, by the assistance of His grace, you may be able to discover your sins, and to make a true and sincere Confession, saying, for example: "O my God, enlighten my darkness, that I may discover my sins; come, O Holy Ghost, and dart from Heaven a ray of Thy divine light".

2. In the second place, we should "examine ourselves carefully on the Commandments of God and of His Church, and on the Seven Deadly Sins"; for we should observe some method in searching out our sins, in order not to forget any. The best method is, to take in order "the Commandments of God and of His Church", with "the Seven Deadly Sins"; for, since every sin is a transgression of the law of God, we cannot have a better means of recollecting the sins we have committed, than that of going over His Commandments and those of His Church, and examining ourselves upon each one of them, whether we have transgressed against it, and in what and how. And as a person may offend against a Commandment not in one, but in many, ways, it is necessary that we should know the different sins which may be committed against each, either from books which treat thereof, or from the instructions of some wise and religious person.

3. Every one must likewise examine himself on the Seven Deadly Sins, asking himself whether or not he has given way to pride or vanity, by thinking too much of himself, and so preferring himself to others; by seeking to be esteemed; by disparaging others; by envying and grieving at the prosperity and good fortune of others, and perhaps rejoicing at their losses and ill fortune; whether he has or has not offended God by sins of intemperance, by excess in drinking, and the

like; whether he has kept and observed the fasts commanded by the Church, and the days of abstinence, in such a manner as he ought; whether, in fine, he has not been slothful and negligent in the service of God, in frequenting the Sacraments, and in the exercise of other good works, according to the opportunities he had. These, dear children, are the chief points on which we should examine ourselves in order to make a good Confession.*

4. "And particularly on our predominant passions, and the duties of our station in life", we should also examine ourselves. We should enter into ourselves, in order to discover our inclinations and "predominant passions",—the sins we most usually fall into—the occasions of offending God—the persons we converse with—the places we frequent—the evil passions we are inclined to—the bad habits we have contracted—the companies we have been in—the conversations we have held—the business we have been concerned in—the employments and occupations in which we have been engaged—and the other "duties of our stations in life".

5. We should, in the third place, "know in what, and how often, we have sinned", with regard to these matters, "in thought, word, deed, or omission". We should examine ourselves as to the different sins we have been guilty of, their species, their number, their enormity, and the aggravating circumstances of these sins. We should examine ourselves as to the way in which these sins were committed, whether they were sins of "thought", or sins of "word", or sins of "deed", or sins of "omission", that is whether they were committed by thinking, or saying, or doing, or omitting anything.

6. We should, in the fourth place, "make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity". We should make an act of Faith, that is, profess our belief in one God,

and in three distinct Persons in that one God ; profess our belief in Jesus Christ, the second Person, become Man to redeem and save us from Hell ; profess our belief in everything that God has taught and revealed to His Church ; profess our belief in the Sacraments, and particularly in the forgiveness of sins by means of the Sacrament of Penance ; profess our belief that on the last day we shall, if found just, enjoy God for ever ; but if wicked, shall be condemned to eternal torments. We should also make an act of " Hope", that is, firmly hope that God will forgive us our sins, if we repent sincerely of them, and reward us for ever in Heaven, because of His infinite power, goodness, and mercy. We should, too, make an act of " Charity", or an act of the love of God—professing that we love Him more than ourselves, and more than anything in this world, and that we are disposed to sacrifice anything, even life itself, sooner than commit an offence against His loving goodness ; that we shall never cease to love Him, because of His infinite goodness and His many other perfections.

7. In the fifth place, we should, " excite ourselves to a sincere contrition for our sins". This is the most important and necessary part of our preparation for Confession ; for, examining ourselves " on the Commandments of God and of His Church", and making acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, are of little avail without " exciting ourselves to a sincere contrition for our sins". Without contrition, or sorrow for sin, our transgressions will not be forgiven. A person dying, without having made an examination of his conscience or a confession of his sins, will be saved by making an act of " perfect contrition", when he has not time to confess his sins, nor has a Priest to whom he can confess them ; but without sincere contrition, it is impossible for a per-

son, guilty of mortal sin, to be saved. You see, then, dear children, how necessary it is for you, when preparing for Confession, to endeavour to “excite yourselves to sincere contrition for your sins”; and how much those err who spend all the time of their preparation for Confession, in endeavouring to call to mind their sins, but make no effort to excite a true sorrow for them. This contrition we must earnestly ask of God, for of ourselves we can never obtain it.

Q. What is Contrition ?

A. A hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God, with a firm resolution of sinning no more.

8. The Council of Trent clearly and fully makes known to us the nature of Contrition, when it defines it to be “a grief of mind, and a detestation of sin committed, accompanied with a resolution not to commit sin any more”—*Conc. Trid.*, sess. 14, c. 4. The word “contrition” means a *breaking to pieces*; and by a *contrite* heart is meant a heart *broken* with grief for sin. “Contrition” may be divided into two kinds—one is called *perfect* Contrition, and the other is called *attrition*, or *imperfect* Contrition. *Perfect* Contrition is “a hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God”, because He is so good in Himself, and because by our sins we have offended the supreme goodness of God, who deserves to be loved above all things, even more than ourselves, and whom we are obliged to love, although there was neither a Heaven nor a Hell. Such was the sorrow of St. Mary Magdalen, of whom our Saviour says, “Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much”. *Perfect* Contrition, as it arises from a perfect love of God for Himself alone, is so pleasing in

His sight, that the moment a person has it, God becomes reconciled to him, and forgives his sins, before he receives Sacramental absolution from a confessor, provided he has, at least, the implied intention of going to Confession, and receiving the Sacrament of Penance, when it can be had—the command of receiving that Sacrament being laid upon all when sin has been committed.†

9. *Imperfect* Contrition, called *attrition*, is “a hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God”, which the soul conceives from a less perfect motive, such as from the consideration of the deformity of sin, of our having lost Heaven, or of our having deserved Hell, or through fear of the judgments of God, and the like. Thus, *perfect* Contrition is “a hearty sorrow” for sin, on account of the injury offered to God, without any reference to the evil sin brings on ourselves. *Attrition* is “a hearty sorrow for having offended God”, on account of the injury sin does to us.

10. In either kind of “Contrition” there is a *fear* and *love* of *God*, but arising from different motives. *Perfect* Contrition includes a filial fear and perfect love of charity, which make us concerned more for the honour of God than for our own welfare. In *attrition* there is a *servile* fear—dreading punishment; and an *imperfect* love, which makes us regard God only as the author of our salvation, and love Him for our own advantage.

11. We learn from the Council of Trent, that *perfect* Contrition reconciles a sinner to God before he actually receives the Sacrament of Penance, provided that this contrition includes a wish and desire of receiving the Sacrament of Penance; but that *imperfect* contrition, or *attrition*, cannot effect this, as it can only *dispose* the soul to *receive* the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance. *Perfect* Contrition is

an interior grace of the Holy Ghost, exciting the soul, but not dwelling in the soul.†

12. "Contrition", whether perfect or imperfect, is "a hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God", that is, a "grief of mind", a regret and interior displeasure which is conceived in the *heart* "for having offended God". "Contrition", together with being "a hearty sorrow", is a "detestation of sin", by which words are meant a hatred and an aversion which one has to sin, in looking on it as a wicked thing, as the mortal enemy of our salvation and of our eternal happiness. "Contrition", therefore, does not consist merely in discontinuing sin, with a resolution of living better for the future; it must necessarily contain a hatred of sin, a sincere detestation of it, according to Ezechiel: "Cast away your iniquities far from ye, by which ye have violated the law of God, and make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit". For, as the joy or pleasure we feel in any object, includes always some love for that object, in like manner the sorrow we feel for anything includes a dislike or hatred of that thing. Hence it is that we should detest sin, not merely on account of the punishment attached to it, but purely on account of the offence given by it to God, who is the Sovereign good.

13. This "hearty sorrow and detestation of sin" should arise from a supernatural motive, not from a natural one. To be sorry for sin, because sin has been injurious to your health, your property, or reputation, is not sufficient, for that would be a natural motive, and sorrow proceeding from such a motive is of no use. "Contrition" requires that we should be sorry for sin, because by it we have offended God, and on that account have forfeited His grace, cast away His friendship, lost Heaven, and deserved Hell.

For this reason it is that we should feel "a hearty sorrow and detestation of sin".

14. Together with "a hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God", Contrition requires that we should have "a firm resolution of sinning no more". Sincere contrition always includes a firm purpose of amendment and "of sinning no more". No sinner was ever truly converted, who had not an absolute will of relapsing no more into sin; because it is impossible to hate sin sincerely without having a resolution at the same time to avoid all sins for the future, for future sins are as diametrically opposed to God as past sins. Hence, whenever we lament sins committed, we should always form resolutions "of sinning no more"; and indeed one who has not these resolutions, can never be said to be really and sincerely sorry for committing sin, which he is ready to commit again immediately. It is rather mocking God to pretend to be reconciled to Him, when, at the same time, we are not firmly resolved to avoid everything that could avert Him from us.

15. Our Saviour Himself has instructed us as to the necessity of this "firm resolution of sinning no more", by the words He addressed to the woman whom He pardoned, in the Gospel: "Go, and sin no more". Hence it is clear that an ineffectual will of sinning no more is not sufficient; the will and purpose of sinning no more should be so firm, so efficacious, and so absolute, as to detach the soul entirely from all sin and from all occasions of sin. David has pointed out to us in what manner and what degree our wills should be "firm", when he declared that he had resolved and sworn to keep the Commandments of the Lord, clearly insinuating thereby that our "resolution of sinning no more" should be as "firm" as if we were bound by oath to sin no more. This "resolution of

sinning no more", in order to be "firm", should be efficacious, that is, it should induce us to use every means necessary to avoid sin. Now, one of the means most necessary for making our resolution "firm", is to avoid the occasions of relapsing into sin; for were we careful to fly from sinful occasions, we certainly would avoid many sins, and so escape damnation. But when a person exposes himself voluntarily to the occasions of sin, particularly of sins against chastity, his "resolution of sinning no more" is not "firm", and his detestation of sin is not sincere or "hearty".

Q. What are the qualities which contrition or true sorrow ought to have?

A. Contrition must have four qualities : it must be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign.

16. "Contrition", whether *perfect* or *imperfect*, should be, in the first place, *interior*, that is, it ought to proceed truly from the heart. As the heart is the principle and origin of sin, Contrition, which is the remedy of it, ought to proceed from the heart, and destroy the love of the creature that reigns there. Hence it is that God requires, and is pleased with, "a contrite and humble heart". He is not satisfied with external marks only, for all external marks of grief are useless, unless grief springs from the heart; hence a conversion, to be sincere, must proceed from the heart. The Prophet Joel advised sinners to be "converted to the Lord with their whole hearts". When it is said that this grief should spring from the heart, it is not meant that it should proceed from this heart of flesh, which we all have within us. What is meant is, that the grief should proceed from our will, which is purely spiritual. When the will is sincerely penetrated with a lively grief, it fre-

quently happens that the grief makes an impression on the sensitive appetite and produces abundance of tears on account of the sympathy that exists between the will and heart. Such tears, according to St. Peter Chrysologus, are the sweet waters of Heaven—the gentle dews of the earth, which extinguish the fire of Hell, and wash out from the records of Heaven God's decree against sinners. But no great importance should be attached to tears, as true Contrition can be felt without them, and tears are not always a proof of true sorrow.

17. The second quality of Contrition is, that it should be *supernatural*, that is, arising from *supernatural* motives, through the grace of God. A person may be sorry for his sins, because by them he has brought trouble, loss, or disgrace upon himself. A sorrow of this kind will never find mercy with God. This is a mere natural sorrow according to the world, but not a sorrow according to God. Now the Scripture tells that it is only “the sorrow that is according to God, which worketh penance steadfast unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death”—II. Cor. vii. 10. The sorrow of true repentance must arise from the thought of our having offended so good a God, our ingratitude to Jesus Christ, the danger in which our sins have placed us, of being eternally separated from Him, and of being eternally condemned to hell fire, the fear of God's judgment, and the horror of sin, on account of its opposition to God. These are *supernatural* motives which our faith teaches us, and which, by the help of God's grace, excite the true sorrow of repentance in our souls. For if a person was sorry for sin merely on account of some temporal affliction caused by it, or on account of shame or disgrace following from it, such sorrow could never procure pardon for sin. It is for this reason that the penance of Antiochus was of no

avail. He sued for pardon, but pardon was not granted, for Antiochus was sorry for his sins merely on account of the bodily pains he felt, and not because they were offensive to God.

18. "Contrition", in the third place, ought to be *universal*, that is, we ought to have true sorrow for all and every one of our mortal sins, without exception; for if we adhere to any one mortal sin, though we should perfectly hate all the others, we can never be said to have true sorrow. I have said *mortal sin*; for, to obtain the pardon of one venial sin, it is not necessary to have sorrow for all our venial sins. One venial sin may be remitted without the remission of another. To obtain forgiveness of any venial sin, it is enough to have sorrow for it. But whether the sin is mortal or venial, God cannot pardon it unless the soul sincerely repents of it. Let those who confess only venial sins, for which they have not sorrow, remember that their confessions are null. Hence, when they wish to receive absolution, they must have sorrow for at least some of the venial faults which they confess, or should accuse themselves of some grievous sin of their past lives for which they are sincerely sorry.

19. But with regard to mortal sins, it is necessary to have true sorrow for all, and a sincere purpose not to commit them again, or any other mortal sin; otherwise, none of them can be remitted. No mortal sin is pardoned without the infusion of grace into the soul; but this grace cannot exist in the soul along with mortal sin. Hence, a person cannot obtain the pardon of one mortal sin, without receiving pardon of them all. The "contrition", therefore, which one may think he has for other sins, cannot justify him in the sight of God, as it is false and imaginary; because if he really detests sin, he should detest all sins, as there is not even one which does not lead to

damnation, as it grievously offends God. Hence it is, that those deceive themselves who pretend to repentance, and yet refuse to pardon injuries, or to be reconciled to their enemies—those also, who will not restore illgotten goods—those who persist in the immediate occasions of sin, and such like—in a word, all those who are wilfully attached to any particular mortal sin, which yet they are not fully resolved to avoid, are not true penitents.

20. “Contrition”, in the fourth place, should be *sovereign* or supreme, that is, our sorrow for having lost God by sin, ought to be greater than our sorrow for having lost all else we love in this world; because, as our sorrow for the loss of any worldly good is always in proportion to the love and esteem we have for it, our sorrow and regret for having lost God by sin, ought to be greater than our sorrow for the loss of everything else, seeing we are obliged to love God above all things. So that we should have a greater detestation of sin, and a greater sorrow for committing it, on account of the danger arising to our salvation, and the injury done to God, than for any natural evils it may cause; and we should be resolved to suffer them all, rather than commit one mortal sin. Sin is the greatest of all evils; for, if we consider the offence, there is none more heinous; and if we consider the punishment, there is none more dreadful. This is the reason why we cannot detest it sufficiently, unless by detesting it above all other misfortunes.

21. “Contrition” does not consist in being more sensible, more lively, or more vehement than the detestation of, and sorrow for, other evils, because such detestation or sorrow is not necessary, nor always in our power. But it should be such as to the notion and judgment which we form of sin, accounting it really the greatest of all evils, as in effect it is, and detesting it in

this respect above all other evils, and resolving firmly not to commit sin any more upon any account whatsoever. We must again remark that to have the necessary detestation of, and sorrow for, sin above all other evils, in our heart, it is not at all necessary that every evil in particular should be considered, as death, torments, loss of property, infamy, and the like, but it suffices that all these evils should be proposed in general. It is sufficient to think sin the greatest of all evils which can ever befall us; to detest and be sorry for it as such; to make a resolution not to commit sin any more, whatever misfortune may happen to us—trusting in the mercy of God, and hoping He will either free us from all these evils, or give us strength to support them with patience.

22. "Contrition", or sorrow for sin, must be accompanied with a *hope of pardon*; otherwise it will be like the sorrow of the damned, who regret their sins, not because they were offences against God, but because they are the cause of their sufferings. Even Judas repented of his treason. "I have", said he, "sinned in betraying innocent blood"—*Matt. xxvii. 4*; but, as he did not hope for pardon, he hanged himself on a tree, and died in despair. Cain also acknowledged that he had sinned in killing his brother Abel, but he despaired of pardon, and said: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon"—*Gen. iv. 13*; and, therefore, he died a reprobate. In reference to the subject of "Contrition", and this greater detestation of sin, and greater sorrow for having committed it, St. Francis de Sales says, that the sorrow of true penitents is a sorrow full of peace and consolation; for the more a true penitent grieves for having offended God, the greater is his confidence of obtaining pardon, and the greater his consolation. Hence, St. Bernard used to say: "If it is so sweet to weep for Thee, what must it be to rejoice in Thee".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

NECESSITY OF PRAYER TO GOD BEFORE CONFESSION.

* Now, consider the necessity for constant, fervent prayer. First of all, it is necessary to man's salvation. For, brothers, we cannot be saved without the grace of God ; we cannot live a single instant as we ought to live without the grace of God ; unless the grace of God be upon us, unless it help us, we cannot mention as we ought to mention the name of Jesus Christ. The absolute necessity of every Christian is Divine grace, and God saw that and knew it—He saw that we could not live without it, and He came down from Heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, and in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was made man ; and He shed His blood, and died on the cross in order that He might by the shedding of that blood purchase for you and for me every single grace that God the Father could confer. And the purchase money was so great that Almighty God opened up the whole treasury of His graces and gave it all to us—all. There is not a single grace in the hand of God that is beyond the ambition of an ordinary Christian man. What do you want ? Do you want purity like that of the Blessed Virgin Mary ? Do you want love as tender and as strong as that of St. John the Evangelist ? Do you want a sorrow as deep and salutary as that of Mary Magdalen ? Tell me what you want, and I will answer you—God holds that in His hand ; it belongs to you ; every grace of God belongs to you through the blood of Jesus Christ. But, the Almighty God has attached one necessary, indispensable condition to those graces. He says to us—“ It is true, all grace belongs to you. I look upon you, and I see upon your souls the character of Baptism. I recognize in you the traces of the blood of My Divine Son, and in virtue of that, I tell you emphatically that every single grace that I have to bestow belongs to you ; and I will give it to you upon one condition, but without that there is no grace. That one condition is Prayer ; you must ask for it ; you must seek for it ; you must come and petition me, rationally, earnestly for that grace. Then you have but to say to me, ‘ Give ’, and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, that your joy may be filled”. And so true is it that the one indispensable condition for obtaining that grace is prayer, that we read in the epistle of St. James, that when certain of the early Christians complained that they were falling into sin and had not grace, he

answered them thus : "Why have you not the grace of God? I will tell you. Therefore you have not received it, because you have not asked". If any man amongst you ask, "Why am I a sinner? Why am I so wicked? Why am I constantly falling and falling", the answer is: My son, you don't know how to pray, you do not practise prayer. You have not the spirit of prayer. If, therefore, my dear brothers, you can dispense with the grace of God, then you can dispense with prayer; but if you believe that God's grace is necessary for you, then you must become men of prayer. —*Very Rev. Thos. Burke, O. P.*

CONTRITION OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

† There was a man who had two sons. He took great care of them, and was very kind to them. One day he told them that when he was dead each of them should have half of all that he had. The younger son thought that he would not like to wait for his share till his father died. He wished to have it directly, and be his own master, and spend it as he liked. So he went one day to his father, and said: "Please, father, will you give me now what you promised I should have when you are dead?" The father gave him what he asked. A few days after the boy gathered together all he had. He left his father's house, and went abroad into a country far off. There he had no good father to look after him and watch over him. So he soon fell into bad company. His money went very fast away, and he had soon spent it all. When he had spent his money, he expected that the companions whom he had treated would help him. But when they saw that his money was spent they all left him! He found himself now even without bread to eat; besides, just at this time, a great famine came on the land. He saw that he must either die or work for his living. So he went and hired himself to a certain man to work for him. This man sent him into the country to feed his pigs. But he got very little for his work. He would have been glad to eat even the cabbage leaves that were given to the pigs. But he was not allowed to eat them. Then he began to think of the happy days of old, when he lived in his father's house, and how kind his father had always been. He remembered, also, that in his father's house even the servants had plenty of bread to eat, whilst he was dying of hunger. It was now he saw how foolish he had been to leave his father. At last he said to himself, I will arise and go back to my father, and say to him; "Father, I have sinned against heaven and

before you. I am not worthy to be called your son any more, only let me be as one of the hired servants in your house". So he rose up, and set off on his way back to his father's house.

So it happened that, just at the time when he was coming back, his father, who was looking out, saw him while yet he was a long way off. He did not wait till his boy came up to him. He set off running to meet him. As soon as he came up to him, he was so glad in his heart to see him again that he could not speak a word. He threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. You may think how ashamed and sorry the boy felt at that moment. So he said directly, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am not worthy to be called your son any more". But these words never reached his father's ears. He was so glad to see him again, that he neither heard nor understood what his son was saying. He called out to the servants directly, and said, "Bring quickly the best dress out of the house, and shoes for his feet, and kill the fatted calf, and get a great feast ready, and let us eat and rejoice; because this my son was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found".

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In order to make a good Confession, what should we first do?
2. What is required of us, in the second place, to make a good Confession?
3. In preparing for Confession, on what should we examine ourselves?
4. Should we examine ourselves on our predominant passions, and the duties of our state of life?
5. Should we examine ourselves on the number and circumstances of our sins?
6. In our preparation for Confession, should we make acts of faith, hope, and charity?
7. Is it necessary, in our preparation for Confession, to excite ourselves to contrition?
8. What is the meaning of Contrition, and what is perfect Contrition?
9. What do you mean by imperfect contrition or attrition?

10. Is the love of God in Contrition the same as the love of God in Attrition?

11. In what consists the difference between Contrition and Attrition?

12. What should be the nature of our grief and detestation of sin?

13. To have true Contrition, should our sorrow arise from a supernatural motive?

14. Can we have Contrition without a resolution of sinning no more?

15. Should this resolution of sinning no more be firm and efficacious.

16. What do you mean by saying that Contrition should be interior?

17. What do you understand by supernatural Contrition?

18. What is meant by saying that Contrition should be universal?

19. Should we be sorry for all the mortal sins we have committed?

20. What do you understand by saying that Contrition should be sovereign?

21. In order that Contrition should be sovereign, is it necessary that it should be most sensible and lively?

22. Should true Contrition be accompanied with a hope of pardon?

PRACTICE.

1. Never approach the Sacrament of Penance without a diligent examination of your conscience.

2. Often excite yourself to Contrition for your sins when preparing for Confession.

3. Always endeavour to excite in your heart perfect Contrition, as it is the surest means to be reconciled with God.

PRAYER.

O my God! we here prostrate ourselves before Thy divine Majesty, and acknowledge that we are wretched sinners, who have often transgressed Thy commands. We confess our guilt and disobedience, and implore Thy pardon. Grant us, Lord, the grace of true sorrow, and give us contrite and humble hearts, that we may bewail our offences and detest our evil ways. In sinning, we have insulted Thy infinite goodness, and slighted Thy great mercy: but we now promise

Thee, O Lord ! that we shall for ever feel sorrow for having offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good in Thyself. Amen.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE MOTIVES OF CONTRITION.

Q. How may we excite ourselves to Contrition ?

A. By the following motives or considerations : the fear of Hell ; the loss of Heaven ; our ingratitude in offending God, who is so good to us ; and the injury our sins do to God, who is infinitely good in Himself.

1. We “ may excite ourselves to Contrition”, first, “ by the fear of Hell”. That we may conceive a fear and hatred of mortal sin, we should, according to the advice of St. Bernard, descend in spirit into the pit of Hell : “ It is necessary that we descend into Hell alive”, that is, think seriously and often of it, “ that we may escape falling into it after death”, says the Saint. If we descend in spirit into Hell, we shall see there the frightful evils which this monster has occasioned ; and from so many dreadful effects, form a judgment of the malice of that cause which produced them ; and there learn, first, to detest sin, the author of so many evils ; secondly, to conceive a wholesome fear of falling into the abyss of misery to which sin exposes us, that we may avoid it.

2. Consider, then, dear children, attentively what faith teaches us concerning Hell ; that it is an eternal fire, which God has prepared for the devil and

his apostate Angels, and by which He has also decreed to punish the sins of all men who follow the rebellious example of those ambitious spirits. This we learn from that terrible sentence which the Son of God shall pronounce at the day of judgment against the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his Angels"—*Matt.*, xxv. 41. From these words we learn, that the same punishment which was prepared for the devils, is also prepared for all men, and that they shall be companions of those wicked and damned spirits, if they should have been their followers, by rebelling against God. This should teach us what that sin is, which renders us liable to the same punishment and damnation endured by the devils. Think of this well, and know what it is to be damned as the devils are damned, and how great that offence must necessarily be, which deserves a punishment equal to that with which the devils are tormented.

3. But what shall that punishment be? I confess, we are not able to comprehend it; but the Son of God, by His infinite wisdom, has summed it up in four words, that we may more easily conceive it—words which contain all the horrors of Hell: "Depart", says He, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire". Who can reflect on this sentence, and not tremble with fear and horror? To be separated from God, the author and fountain of all good, whose protection is a blessing to all creatures, and who no sooner turns away His face, but all things are in trouble and confusion—to be cursed by God, that is, hated and rejected with indignation, abandoned to all possible evils, without relief, without comfort, without hope—to be condemned to fire, that is, to the most insupportable of all torments, and this for all eternity—without hope of ever being delivered from them, so that, neither a hundred years, nor a hundred thousand

millions of years, make up for the least part of that dreadful duration! The unfortunate damned shall be cursed by God for ever. From the very moment that this fatal decree shall be pronounced against them, there will be no further resource, nor hope of relief. This decree will be a thunderbolt, which, when once it falls upon their guilty heads, shall never be withdrawn. It will incessantly torture them, for, never shall they have the least repose. During all eternity, they will continually hear the words of their condemnation: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire". O almighty God, how terrible art Thou in Thy judgments! Are not those strangely blind and stupidly insensible who fear not to fall into Thy hands at the hour of death? Who can live without an apprehension of the tremendous sentence of final judgment, which will hurl the damned into endless woe? From the moment that it shall be passed, it shall continually roll over their heads, crushing them unceasingly, and yet destroying them not!

4. The rebel angels and damned souls, will suffer all these excruciating torments for all eternity. You, too, have merited the torments of Hell, by the sins you have committed, and have already deserved to be of the number of those unhappy damned suffering, everlasting torments, and deprived of every hope of ever seeing God, or of ever being redeemed from Hell. Is not the thought of this enough to make you weep and lament? When you committed a mortal sin, you became at once liable to suffer the eternal torments of hell, and would have suffered them before now, had not God, in His mercy, waited for you to do penance. And if you now neglect penance, you may rest assured, that on the last day you shall hear your doom irrevocably pronounced: "Go, ye accursed, into everlasting fire". Is not this an urgent motive to raise in you a detestation of sin, which has

cast you into such imminent danger, the very thought of which ought to make you tremble?

5. "The loss of Heaven" is the second motive to "excite ourselves to contrition". We should often think, dear children, of the great loss we incur by mortal sin. By mortal sin we close the gates of Heaven for ever against us; we deprive ourselves of the happiness of the Saints, we shut ourselves out from the mansions of the Blessed, and deprive ourselves for ever of the kingdom of God's glory. On account of one mortal sin—and that a sin of thought—bright Angels were hurled down from Heaven, and were deprived of eternal happiness, joy, and glory. Lucifer, who, before his sin of disobedience, was one of the most beautiful of God's creatures, became, by this sin, an infernal dragon, an infuriate demon, and a sworn and irreconcilable enemy of God and man.

6. What is it that caused this lamentable change? Sin alone. It was sin, which God could not endure in His most perfect creatures. He found sin in Heaven and in the Angels themselves, and did not pardon them, but chained them in Hell, to be there tormented for an eternity; and so has made known to all His creatures the hatred He bears to this horrible monster. On account of the sin of disobedience, our first parents were driven out of Paradise—that garden of delights—and they and all their posterity were condemned to death, and to all the miseries we now groan under. And the gates of Heaven, which till then were open, were immediately shut against Adam and Eve and all their posterity. Ah! on thinking of this dreadful punishment of sin, how comes it that we commit it?

7. "The loss of Heaven" is the first and greatest torment of the damned in Hell. It is the most dreadful torment that the soul in Hell suffers—torment far and away beyond the most rigorous punish-

ment that could be inflicted on us in this world. We are not sensible of this here, taken up as we are with worldly and sensual pursuits; but after death, when loosed from the chains of mortality, and separated from every object to which we had been attached during life, we, if condemned to Hell, shall then find and feel, from woful experience, that God alone should have been the object of our love, and for that love everything should have been sacrificed. The damned shall then be racked with the most thirsty desire of possessing God; their souls will be tending continually towards Him as the only centre of their repose; but He will repel them with indignation, and not allow them so much as a glimpse of His glory. They shall then feel that God, their chief and only good, is eternally lost to them. “*Go ye forth, accursed, into eternal fire*”. You have abandoned your God during life, and now God abandons you. You shall never enjoy My presence; you shall be ever separated from Me by an immense gulf, over which you can never pass. Now, “know and see how bitter a thing it is for thee to have left the Lord thy God”—*Jer. II. 19.*

8. For well the wretched sinner now understands “the loss of Heaven”. I have lost Heaven, and have lost it for ever. I have lost it through my own fault; for a pleasure that lasted only for a moment, I have lost it! Never shall I behold it; my eyes shall never be gladdened by the sight of it; an eternal separation has taken place between God and me! Lost to me for ever, ever, ever! Oh! what a thought! what a thought during an eternity! This feeling of despair it is that Jesus Christ alludes to in the Gospel of St. Mark, where He says that in hell “the worm never dieth, and the fire is never extinguished”. The worm of conscience shall never give rest or peace to the guilty soul, but for ever shall be gnawing him.

Of all torments, the most insupportable is the reflection that *heaven you shall never behold*; of all punishments it is the most frightful, and of all woes it is the heaviest. All the Saints have told us so. The thought of having lost the kingdom of Heaven is, says St. John Chrysostom, a thousand times a more rigorous torment than that caused by the action of devouring flames. "The rich man tormented in Hell", says St. Peter Chrysologus, "is more racked by the image ever present to him, of the happiness which he has lost, than by the sufferings of the fire in which he burns. Heaven burns him more than Hell does. The greatest torment he endures, the most active flame which consumes him, is the view of the happiness enjoyed in Heaven by those he formerly despised". Is it possible, dear children, that thinking on this melancholy "loss of Heaven", we can feel otherwise than sorry for our sins? Can you contemplate such a loss without dread and dismay?†

9. "Our ingratitude in offending God, who is so good to us", is the third motive by which we may "excite ourselves to contrition". Hard, indeed, must that heart be, which the patience and goodness of God cannot soften to compunction. A generous soul, reflecting on them, would be incited to turn to God quickly, and to profit, without delay, of the many graces which He is ready to bestow on him in abundance. The Lord, as He Himself says, "wills not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live"; and shall we ungenerously despise this goodness, which invites us to Penance, as the Apostle declares? God did not exercise His goodness towards the rebel angels. He allowed them no time to do penance. They were damned, and will be eternally damned, for one mortal sin. God in His mercy has not acted so towards us. He has given us time to turn towards Him; and shall we by a continuance in

sin, show "our ingratitude in offending Him"? We have received many favours and graces from God—He has created us—He has redeemed us—He every day preserves us from death—He watches over us every moment as the apple of His eye. And thus favoured and cherished, we still treat God as if He were our greatest enemy!

10. God, in the prophecy of Isaias, severely reproaches the Jews with their ingratitude to Him. I have nourished children, says He, I have reared them up, and they have despised me. The "ingratitude" of the Jews was indeed very great, and deserved every punishment; but "ingratitude" to God in a Christian is much more grievous, and merits a much severer punishment. "What have I done, that you should treat me in so cruel a manner?" says God, in the melting tones of the Prophet, to the ungrateful Christian. If he who was my enemy had treated Me thus, indeed I would have borne it; but that you should act thus! You! My familiar and friend—you, whom I have made My child by Baptism—you, for whom I have prepared a place in My eternal kingdom—you, whom I have redeemed from Hell by dying for you on the cross—you, whom I have so often fed with My own body and blood—you, loaded with My graces and favours—you to act so—you to outrage Me and mock Me, and to crucify Me in your very heart! for by every mortal sin you crucify Me again! And what answer can you give to this reproach of God? Ponder on the many graces you have received from Him, and then blush at "your ingratitude in offending God, who is so good to you".

11. "And the injury our sins do to God, who is infinitely good in Himself", is the fourth motive or consideration by which we may "excite ourselves to contrition". The greatest injury is offered to God when we commit mortal sin. In sinning, we despise

God, and prefer to Him our wicked desires and vile passions. When we commit mortal sin, we turn our back upon God, telling Him at the same time, we care not in any way for Him—that we fear not His anger, nor dread His punishment, and that what our passions suggest we will do. Every time we commit mortal sin, we despise and inflict the greatest injury on God, who is so good in Himself.

12. The great injury done to God by mortal sin we cannot comprehend; for, to comprehend fully its enormity, we should fully know the God who is offended by it. But who can know God's greatness, majesty, power, and love? No one; for His majesty, power, and goodness are infinite. Now, God being infinite in majesty and goodness, an insult offered to Him is also infinite in malice, because the Person offended is infinite. We cannot, then, fully know the injury done to God by mortal sin. All that we know is, that it strikes directly at God Himself—that it is a rebellion and high treason against Him, and involves a contempt of all His perfections. As sin, therefore, is so great an injury to God, "who is so good in Himself", we should always entertain the greatest horror of it, and endeavour to "excite ourselves to Contrition" by a frequent consideration of the evil and filthy nature of sin, and of its opposition to God, "who is infinitely good in Himself".

Q. Do you recommend any other motive to excite sorrow for our sins?

A. Yes; to consider that the Son of God died for our sins, and that we "crucify Him again" as often as we offend Him.

13. Another motive, and one most effective, by which we "may excite ourselves to contrition", is the

consideration of the sufferings and death which Jesus Christ underwent "for our sins". If we but reflect upon the pains and sorrows of the life of the Son of God, His fasting, preaching, watchings, prayers, and all that He has done and suffered, as well in soul as in body, during the thirty-three years of His mortal life, and consider that all this tended to the destruction of sin, for which He principally came into the world, we cannot be otherwise than sorry for our sins. The time being at length come wherein He was to enter into the last conflict of that great war which He had to wage against sin and the devil, what was He not obliged to do and suffer, that He might conquer so base an enemy ! Indeed, He gained a glorious victory, but it was with the loss of His precious blood and at the price of His death. But what a death, dear children ! A death under sorrows and reproaches—a death accompanied by pain and torture—a death on the Cross. A death accompanied by all imaginable insults, given by those on whom He had conferred so many favours—betrayed by one of His own Apostles to His mortal enemies—abandoned by the others—denied by Peter—arraigned before a judge—accused as a criminal—sentenced and condemned as a malefactor—exposed to the derision of the multitude—scourged—delivered over to the insolence of soldiers, who crowned Him with thorns as a mock king—led to execution—nailed to a cross—exposed to public view between two thieves, as an impostor and blasphemer. Amidst these excessive pains of His body, and yet far greater anguish of His soul—overwhelmed with sorrow and sadness, He expires on the Cross, commending His spirit into the hands of His eternal Father.

14. Oh ! dear children, have you ever thought on these sufferings of the Son of God, your Saviour ? Or, if you have thought on them, did you reflect on

them with the attention they deserve? But perhaps you have not reflected upon that which caused them. Have you thoroughly considered that it was sin alone which crucified the Son of God? It is true, that they were Jews who persecuted Him to death; that it was Pilate who condemned Him, and the sanguinary executioners who nailed Him to the Cross. It is also true, that Christ offered Himself to death, and underwent all these ignominies voluntarily: "He was offered because it was His own will"—*Isai.*, liii. 7. It is moreover true that it was His eternal Father who demanded that offering of Him, and required Him to drink the bitter chalice of His Passion; but it is no less true that sin was the first cause of the sufferings of the Son of God—sin first persecuted Him, and was at last His most cruel executioner. If He offered Himself to death, it was because He had willingly charged Himself with our sins. If the eternal Father would have Him suffer, it was to receive from Him the satisfaction which was due to the Divine justice on account of sin. "The Lord", saith *Isaias*, "hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"—*Isai.* iii. 6; and His eternal Father says: "For the wickedness of my people have I struck Him"—*Isai.* liii. 8.†

15. Listen to the description the same Prophet gives of the torments of the Son of God, which he saw as clearly in spirit as if he had beheld them at the foot of the Cross: "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: and we have seen Him despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was

bruised for our sins ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed"—*Isai.* liii. 2, 3, 4, 5. See, then, how much our sins have made Jesus Christ suffer ! Behold to what condition that cruel enemy, sin, has reduced the Son of God ! And considering all this, and knowing that sin could not be expiated, nor its damage repaired, but by the death of Christ, should we not tremble at the consequences of even consenting to the thought of committing it ?

16. Ought we not then avow, that the wounds we have received by sin are truly dreadful, since they could not be healed by anything less than the blood of the Son of God ? Oh, children, "acknowledge how great those gashes were, that obliged the only Son of God to be wounded for their cure. If those sores had not been mortal and the cause of eternal death, the Son of God should have never died for their removal"—*St. Bernard, Serm. 3. de Nat. Dom.* Can there be a stronger motive to lament and detest our sins, than the reflection of their being the cause of the sufferings of the Son of God and of His death upon the Cross ? Have we not reason to sigh and lament as the Jews did when they looked on the destruction of the royal city of Jerusalem, and the loss of their King ? They cried out, the crown is fallen from our heads : woe to us, because we have sinned (*Jeremiah*, v. 16). We have even more reason to lament, as by our sins we have been the cause of the death of Jesus Christ, our King, our Redeemer, and our God.

17. We should also never forget that, dreadful as these sufferings had been, which Jesus Christ endured for our sins, we renew them, and "that we crucify Him again as often as we offend Him". Yes ; "as often as we offend Him" by mortal sin, we renew our Saviour's agony and bloody sweat in the garden—we again scourge Him at the pillar—we again crown

Him with thorns—we again nail Him to the Cross—we again make Him die an ignominious and painful death. Sinners, not content with having caused our Redeemer all the ignominies and all the torments He endured during His passion, renew them again daily by their crimes, “and crucify again” the Son of God as much as in them lies, as St. Paul tells us. §

Q. Which of these motives is the best to excite Contrition ?

A. To be sorry for our sins, because they are offensive to God, who is infinitely good and perfect in Himself.

18. The best motive to excite Contrition for our sins, is, “because they are offensive to God, who is infinitely good and perfect in Himself”. We should not content ourselves with being sorry for our sins, because by them we deserve to be cast into Hell-fire ; but we should endeavour to excite Contrition in our hearts by a better motive, and that is, “because they are offensive to God, who is infinitely good and perfect in Himself”.

19. It is, indeed, certain, that to be sorry for having offended God because by our sins we have lost Heaven and merited Hell, is a good and profitable motion of the soul—is a gift of God. But still, it is a truth, that every penitent sinner ought to use every exertion, and make every effort, to be heartily sorry for all his sins, “because they are offensive to God, who is infinitely good and perfect in Himself”—because they outrage Him who is the source and fountain of all that is good, and who, upon a thousand titles, deserves to be loved above all things—because they inflict the greatest injury on a God infinitely good, holy, and wise, and on that account are infinitely detestable, and ought to be hated and

detested with a supreme and, if possible, infinite hatred, although there was neither a Heaven to be lost nor a Hell to be feared. ¶

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE TORMENTS OF HELL—THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

* We can again reflect upon the power of God as shown in His punishment of sin ; for this is the second great feature of His omnipotence, when it comes out in all the rigours of His justice. Oh ! how terrible is this consideration, that, whilst we are here, peacefully assembled around this holy altar, there is, some where or other in the creation of God, the vast, the terrible prison of Hell, with its millions on millions of unhappy inmates, and its flames roaring, sweeping, devouring, and yet not consuming ; that somewhere or other the air is filled with the cry—the spiritual cry—of the imprisoned souls and reprobate angels of God, dashing in all their wild and impotent rage against those bars that shall never permit them to go forth ; that there is enkindled by the breath of an angry God a fire that shall never be extinguished ; and there, for all eternity, the hand of God in all its omnipotence will fall with all the weight of its unsatisfied vengeance of fire ! Terrible, terrible it is to think upon the despair that, looking forward to an endless eternity, sees no ray of hope, no moment of mitigation of the terrible punishments of the soul and of the body there ! Yet if you reflect upon it, what is more natural than that the sinner, dying in his sins, should go down to Hell ? Where can he go ? He cannot go to Heaven with all his sins upon him. He died the enemy of God. He died, with his free will turned away from God. He died with the hatred of God in his heart because of the presence of sin. Is this the man you would introduce into the Divine presence ? Is it on those lips, accustomed to blasphemy, that you would place the ringing canticle of praise ? He had no idea of the joys of Heaven, for they are spiritual ; and this man's only idea or notion of delight was in gross, carnal sensuality. He had no idea of the Lord of Heaven, for all his lifetime he spoke the language of Hell—cursing and blaspheming. He had no idea of the God of Heaven, for all his lifetime he served the demon of his own

passions and his own evil inclinations. There is nothing in him attuned with Heaven. It would be violence offered to him to send him to Heaven, and to make him enter into the joys of God. No; it is natural that he should go down into the cesspool of Hell. Either his sin must leave him, or else that sin, abiding upon his soul, must leave him under the brand of God's vengeance.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

CONTRITION FOR SIN ARISING FROM CONSIDERING THE
LOSS OF HEAVEN.

† St. John Climacus, during his journey in Egypt, came to a certain monastery, and thus describes the penance of the monks. "Being come into this monastery", he says, "I beheld there things which the eye of the slothful had never seen, the ear of the negligent had never heard, and the heart of sluggards will never be able to comprehend. I saw there actions and words capable, if I may so speak, to do violence to the Almighty, and bow down His mercy in a moment. I saw some of those holy penitents who passed whole nights standing upright in the open air, as if they had been immovable; and when sleep began to seize on them, I saw them struggle, by reviling themselves, to keep it off, as unwilling to grant their bodies repose. Some with their eyes lifted up to heaven, and with a sorrowful voice, called upon God to have mercy on them. Others stood with their hands tied behind their backs, as if they were great criminals. They did not dare to lift up their eyes to heaven, but remained silent. Others, placed on sackcloth and ashes, hid their heads betwixt their knees, or beat their foreheads against the ground. You might see others striking their breasts, and thinking of the happy days before they had sinned. Others there were who watered the ground with their tears. Some cried aloud that they were unworthy of pardon, but prayed that God would punish them in this world, and save them from eternal torments in the world to come. They were so humbled and so bent down under their sins, that the very stones might have pitied them. No laughter was ever heard amongst them. There was no vain-glory or pride seen. There was no care about their body, what they should eat or drink, or what was pleasant to the taste. Even the desire of these things was no longer in their hearts. They thought about nothing but their sins and death. Will God forgive us? they cried: has He heard our prayers? How will it be with us in the last moment of our lives? will the gates of heaven be opened to us?

"It was a terrible sight when the death of any of them was at hand. When some of these blessed penitents saw that any of their companions was about to quit the world, they gathered round him. In a sorrowful and compassionate voice they say to him : "O dear brother and companion of our labours and penances, how do you find yourself ? what are your thoughts now ? have you a firm hope of salvation ? do you hear in your soul a voice which says *thy sins are forgiven thee*, or do you hear a terrible voice saying the wicked shall be punished in hell ? Tell us sincerely how you are, that we may know how we shall be when death comes, for the time of your penance is now finished'. To these questions some answered by thanking God for His great mercies ; others, frightened at the sight of the terrible judgment of God which was coming near, showed greater sorrow than ever for their sins"—*St. John Climacus*.

SORROW FOR SIN EXCITED BY THE MERCY OF GOD.

† Now, when a man commits sin—falls from one sin into another ; when he becomes a drunkard, or an impure man, or a blasphemer, or in any way hands over his soul to the devil, then his will is opposed to God—his heart turned against God. And how can the Almighty God convert that man, whose will is opposed to Him, and the freedom of whose will He is bound to respect ? Here comes in the wonderful action of God's wisdom united to His omnipotence. He will not say to him, "You must be converted". He will not, because if He said it, that conversion would not be free, would not be worthy in man, nor could it be deserving of the favour and acceptance of Almighty God. The freedom that is in God essentially He has reflected on man, and he that is saved must be saved by a free co-operation with God's grace ; and he that is damned goes down to hell of his own free will. Therefore the Lord says : "Thy pride is in thyself". Here is the difficulty, then, that the mind of God alone, the wisdom of God alone, united to His omnipotence, can solve. Here is a man whose will is opposed to God. As long as that will is opposed to God, Almighty God can never have mercy on that man. And yet God can, in virtue of His own eternal laws, induce that will to relinquish its opposition to Him. Therefore, by His graces, by His wonderful attractive powers, He awakens in that sinner's soul the first feelings of love. He puts before the sinner's eyes, first, the hideous, yet true lineaments of sin. He excites in the sinner's heart the first feeling of remorse and of loneliness at being separated from God. He puts into the sinner's cup of pleasure the little

drop that embitters it somewhat to His own spiritual taste; and He reminds him how sweet it was to have loved the Lord his God. He thunders in that sinner's ears the announcement of His judgments; He shakes that sinner's soul with the first tremblings of that holy fear which is the beginning of wisdom. With a merciful hand He opens the vision of hell, and shows to that sinner's startled glance the lowest abode of the everlasting dwelling-place of the enemies of God. And thus, by a thousand powerful graces, sweetly, yet strongly, does He bring that sinner's will around, until at length the impediment is removed, and the man comes freely, not forced, but drawn and attracted; not coerced at all, yet, coming in spite of himself—in spite of himself, yet freely—and—mystery of the omnipotence of divine grace and of the wonderful respect of God's omnipotence for the freedom of man—he comes and surrenders himself to God. Then, and only then, can the Almighty God absolve him from sin. Consider how great is the obstacle that has to be removed from that sinner's soul before an omnipotent God can free him from his sin! There is there a will opposed to God. If all the angels in Heaven, if all the powers in Heaven and upon earth, strained themselves to change that will, their action would be simply impotence before it; so tremendous is the law that preserves the perfect freedom of man's will for good or for evil.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST WITNESSED
BY HIS MOTHER.

§ Mary took the word, the bitter word, from the Prophet of His agonies and her sorrow, and from that hour every unfolding grace of the Child was but a wound in her heart. As she folded Him upon her bosom she knew that she was only nourishing Him in order that she might offer Him to scorn and to ignominy. She leaned His young head upon her heart, but well she knew that she was only rearing Him for strokes and scourging, for sorrow and for shame. And it was her first great sorrow that banished all human joy out of her life—the words of Simeon revealed to her more clearly the mystery which she knew before from the Prophet who described Him—that her Child was to be the Redeemer of the world, and that her love and her God was also to be a Man of Sorrow, needy, torn from head to foot, despised of men, a worm and not a man, from whom all His beauty was to depart, so that men should know Him no more. This was her first sorrow. Then came the sorrow after His birth, the

flight into Egypt, where the young mother had to take her child hurriedly in the night time, forced to provide Him with food and clothing, and face that long journey. Then, after returning to Jerusalem, her third great sorrow, at that moment, when by His own Divine dispensation, not by any fault of hers, she sought Him, and the people of Jerusalem beheld that woman a broken-hearted woman, whose cry filled the air, with tears upon her face and grief depicted on her countenance. But greater sorrow remained to her when she saw her Son dragged to crucifixion. Her heart fainted away within her. Was this her own child? Was this her own beloved Jesus? Was this the light of her eyes, the joy of her life? She came; He made her go so that the cup of her sorrows might be filled, and when she came near enough to speak to Him, and almost touch Him with her hands, rude hands pushed her away, and the mother had not the consolation that was reserved for Veronica, to wipe away one drop of blood, one tear from His eyelids. Then she was not permitted to touch Him with her hands. Yet she was faithful to Him with all her sorrows, and her next great agony was to see Him slowly expiring before her eyes. Three hours did the Virgin stand by the Cross. O fathers and mothers, realize if you can; O, tender, loving hearts, picture to yourselves that anguish! The Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mother, stood for three long hours and watched her only Child dying upon the Cross. Every moment added to her agony. She saw the head fall under the nail strokes of His executioner; she marked the faint and fainter beating of the afflicted and broken heart; she watched the pallor of death coming slowly, but oh! how surely, over the eyes of her Divine Child; she heard the voice grow fainter and fainter, until at length in the merest murmur of agony, she heard Him say: "I die of thirst"; and she saw them take a reed and on it put a sponge steeped in vinegar, and press it against His lips. She saw the sweat of death rolling down His head in gory drops, from the thorny crown. For three hours she watched this; she, His mother; she, whose only Child He was. He died before her eyes; but her sorrows were not over. She must stand there when the rude soldier comes with his long sharp lance, and with all his rude force and energy drove it through the side of the dead Man, and the great cross reeled. He dragged back that lance again from the heart of Jesus, and upon the very head of His mother, who stood underneath, there poured forth water and blood.—*Very Rev. T. Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is the fear of hell a good motive for exciting contrition?
2. Of what nature are the sufferings of those condemned to hell?
3. Shall the damned be separated from God, and condemned to hell for ever?
4. Have we, by our sins, already merited the pains of hell?
5. Was mortal sin the cause of the Angels' fall from Heaven?
6. Was it for mortal sin that our first parents were driven from Paradise?
7. Is the loss of Heaven the greatest torment of the damned?
8. What do St. Chrysostom and St. Peter Chrysologus say of the loss of Heaven?
9. To excite contrition, should we think of our ingratitude in offending God?
10. How does the ingratitude of a Christian to God exceed that of the Jew?
11. What is the fourth motive to excite ourselves to contrition?
12. Can we comprehend the great injury done to God by mortal sin?
13. Is the consideration of the sufferings of Christ the best motive to excite ourselves to contrition?
14. Was sin the cause of the sufferings and death of Christ?
15. What does Isaias say of the sufferings of Jesus Christ?
16. Should the thought of what God suffered be the most effective motive for exciting contrition?
17. Do we crucify again the Son of God as often as we offend Him?
18. What motive do you think the best to excite ourselves to contrition?
19. Should we be earnest in endeavouring to be sorry for our sins, because they are offensive to God, who is so good in Himself?

PRACTICE.

1. Remember, that when you make an act of contrition, if you are not sorry for offending God, it is not contrition at all

2. When exciting yourself to contrition, have before your eyes the happiness of the blessed, and the torments of the damned.

3. Recollect, that to be sorry for sin, because by it you offend God, who is so good in Himself, is perfect contrition, and reconciles us at once with God.

PRAYER,

O my God ! I now understand why I should always detest sin, and how great its enormity. When I committed mortal sin, I lost heaven, deserved hell and eternal damnation. But above all, I have offended Thy infinite goodness. The injury which I have offered by sin is so great an evil, that it caused Thy Son Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to suffer death on the cross. I shall often think on those subjects which are capable of exciting sorrow in my heart, that I may always deplore my wretchedness and misery. It is from Thee alone, O my God, that I can expect this grace of true repentance. I beg of Thee a contrite and humble heart, which Thou shalt not despise.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON CONFESSION, AND ITS NECESSARY QUALITIES.

Q. What must we do at Confession?

A. We must beg the Priest's blessing, say the Confiteor, accuse ourselves of our sins, listen attentively to his instructions, and renew our sorrow when he gives absolution.

1. When entering the confessional, we should be penetrated with the truth, that it is to God we are going to make our accusation; for we undoubtedly, by these words, "I confess to Almighty God", do call upon Him to listen to the Confession which we are about to make. Being in the confessional, we should place ourselves in spirit at the feet of our God, make the Sign of the Cross, "beg the Priest's blessing", saying: *Bless me, father, for I have sinned*. When the Priest has given you his blessing, "say the Confiteor", as far as "through my fault, through my most grievous fault". At these words, we should bow down our heads, and penitently strike our breasts. Then tell how long it has been since our last Confession. We should mention whether or not we were then absolved, or whether or not we received Holy Communion. We should also mention, before we commence the accusation of our sins, whether or not we performed the penance received at our last Confession.

2. Then we should begin our Confession, and "accuse ourselves of our sins", confessing, first, any sin which might have been forgotten in our last

Confession, and of any faults committed whilst making it. After which we should proceed to the accusation of other sins, beginning with those which we feel very reluctant to mention, as this act of humility and generosity is likely to draw down a blessing from God on our Confession. We need preface only the first sin with the words, *I accuse myself*. Whilst "accusing ourselves of our sins", we should try to keep in mind that it is to God we are making our Confession. We should be careful not to mention our sins as we should recite a lesson we have by heart, but, on the contrary, tell them with sorrow, as we proceed.

3. Having finished our accusation, and submitted our doubts to our Confessor, we should "listen attentively to his instructions", and feel assured that all other thoughts at that time, however good in themselves, are an illusion of the enemy, who would thus deprive us of the advantage to be derived from the counsel and "instructions" of our spiritual father. Should our confessor deem it better to defer our absolution, we must humbly submit to his judgment, as to that of a judge, physician, and father. To repine would be extremely wrong, for deferring absolution is frequently expedient, and in many cases absolutely necessary. When our confessor tells us that he is about to absolve us, we should incline our heads in the most respectful manner, and recollect that our Saviour's blood, shed with so much love for us in the garden and on the Cross, is about to be applied to our guilty souls, to wash and cleanse them from every stain. We should then "renew our sorrow when he gives absolution", reciting from our hearts an act of contrition for having offended so good a God, and begging of His Divine Majesty that we may rather die than ever offend Him by any wilful transgression of His law.

Q. What are the qualities necessary for making a good Confession?

A. The qualities of a good Confession are, that it should be entire, simple, sincere, humble, and sorrowful.

4. In the first place, Confession should be *entire*. A Confession may be entire in two ways—either materially or formally. Confession is *materially* entire, when a person confesses all the sins he has been guilty of, without omitting or forgetting any. Confession is *formally* entire, when a person, after examining his conscience with all the diligence in his power, tells all the sins he recollects. According to the Council of Trent, this *formal* integrity is only required, and is sufficient for the validity of the Sacrament—that is, a penitent is only obliged, after examining his conscience carefully, to tell in Confession all the mortal sins he *recollects*, without voluntarily concealing any of them. The same Council adds, that if a man conceals, *willingly*, one mortal sin in Confession, the Confession of the rest is of no service to him; because mortal sins cannot be pardoned separately—one without the other—as they are all opposed to sanctifying grace; and any of them remaining in the soul, hinders the Divine grace from entering into it. Hence, if we should conceal but only one mortal sin in Confession, the Sacrament cannot produce its effect—which is the sanctification of the soul by the infusion of Divine grace. And, in truth, what benefit can a person derive from concealing a sin in Confession? Does he think that God is ignorant of it, because man does not know of it? Does he expect to be cured of a wound, if he conceals it from his physician? No; he certainly never can or will. He will be damned by the very means which God gave him to work out his salvation. He shall be condemned for his silence, who should have been pardoned had he truly confessed.*

5. Again, you must not only confess the number of your sins, but you must also declare the circumstances which either change the nature of the sin, or considerably increase the guilt. Thus, for example, it is not enough for a person to accuse himself, by saying: "I have stolen, or taken what was not my own", but he must also tell the value of what he stole; and if he stole it out of a Church, or some other holy place, that circumstance—which makes it a sacrilege—must be expressed in Confession. This condition of making an *entire* Confession is absolutely necessary, as you have been already told; for if any person wilfully omits telling one mortal sin, either out of fear or shame, or on any other account, the Confession which he makes is void and of no value, because none of his sins can be forgiven unless they are all forgiven; and, therefore, he returns more guilty from Confession than he was before.

6. In the second place, your Confession must be *simple*—that is, all superfluous circumstances and useless stories should be cut off. A penitent should precisely tell his Confessor his various sins—their number, their enormity, their species, and their notably aggravating circumstances. A penitent should lay before his Confessor the state of his conscience, such as it really is—he should confess as certain what he knows to be certain, and doubtful what he judges to doubtful. Hence, he should not tell unmeaning stories, nor introduce useless circumstances into his Confession. When a penitent begins to tell circumstances either useless, unnecessary, or foreign to Confession—circumstances that do not contribute to make known the state of his conscience—he should be warned to retrench such useless stories; and if he requires consolation or advice, it can be given to him.

7. In the third place, your Confession should be

sincere—that is, made without lies or excuses. We should confess our sins without any ambiguity or duplicity—without artfully disguising or wilfully concealing any one sin whatsoever. We should tell in Confession every sin, as it really occurred, as it really is, or as we think it to be, without addition or diminution; we should not either omit or add any aggravating circumstances. In the tribunal of Penance, the criminal must be his own accuser—not his own advocate. He who accuses himself sincerely, without extenuating his faults, shall obtain pardon. It is related that the Duke of Ostuni, being one day in a galley, went about among his slaves, asking each for what crimes he had been condemned. All answered that they were innocent; only one acknowledged that he was guilty and deserved punishment. The Viceroy said: “Then it is not right to have you here among so many innocent persons”. Thus the man who confessed his guilt obtained his liberty. Now, how much more will God pardon him who confesses his sins without excusing them in the tribunal of Penance.

8. How many there are who make their Confession badly. Some tell their Confessor the few good actions which they perform, but are silent as to their sins. “Father”, they say, “I hear Mass every day; I say the beads; I do not blaspheme; I do not swear; I do not take my neighbour’s property”. Why do you speak in this manner in Confession? Is it in order to be praised by the Confessor? Examine your conscience carefully, and you shall find that you have committed many sins, and you shall find a hundred things to be corrected—detraction, obscene expressions, lies, imprecations, rancour, thoughts of revenge, and various other sins. Others, instead of accusing themselves, begin to excuse their sins, and enter into a dispute with their Confessor.

398 NECESSARY QUALITIES OF CONFESSION.

"Father", they say, "I blaspheme, because I have a master that cannot be borne with; I have indulged hatred to a neighbour, because he had spoken ill of me; I have given myself up to sin in order to procure the means of subsistence". What benefit do you expect to derive from such Confessions? What is your object? Is it that your Confessor may approve of your sins? Listen to what St. Gregory says: "If you excuse yourself, God will accuse you; if you accuse yourself, God will excuse you". Our Lord complained bitterly to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, of those who excuse their sins in Confession, and cast the blame of their own faults upon others, saying: "Such a person has been the occasion of my sin; such another has tempted me". Thus they come to Confession to commit additional sins; for, in order to excuse themselves, they injure a neighbour's reputation without necessity.

9. A penitent should accuse himself of only his own faults and sins; consequently, he should never hurt or injure the reputation of others, by mentioning their sins or faults, except in two cases. The first is, when a penitent cannot confess his own sins without discovering, at the same time, the sins of others. The second is, when a penitent prudently judges that by telling his Confessor the sins of another, the Confessor may reclaim or reform that person; for, it is admitted by all, that it would be not only imprudent, but really uncharitable, to tell even in the Confessional the sins of others, without necessity. This would be, according to St. Bernard, "lamenting the sins of others, and doing no penance for our own".

10. In the fourth place, your Confession should be *humble*. This condition is absolutely necessary, in order to repair the injury done to God and the contempt offered to His holy law. This humility should be both external and internal. External humility re-

quires that a penitent should confess on his knees—his dress humbly plain, and not gorgeously fine—his hat off, if a man, and modestly attired, if a woman. Internal humility requires a penitent to tell all the sins he has committed, not the good actions he has performed, not to cast the blame of his evil actions on the solicitations of man or the temptations of the devil. One should not come to the tribunal of Penance with the appearance of rather justifying his conduct than of confessing his sins. Nor should he cast the blame of his sins on his constitution, or on the impossibility of living on good terms with those with whom he is bound to live. On the contrary, true interior humility will ever prompt him to impute all his sins and faults to his own malice ; and conscious of his own misery, and the necessity he has of the Divine mercy, he will humble himself profoundly before God for all the evil he has done.

11. Almighty God, says St. James, “resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble”. If all your actions ought to be done with the spirit of humility, how much more that of Confession, when you come to present yourselves as criminals before Almighty God, to accuse yourselves, and beg pardon for your offences? Your Confession must be humble, like that of the Publican, who thought himself not worthy to lift up his eyes to Heaven, but with an humble and contrite heart cried out, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner”. You must, therefore, enter into the like dispositions of humility, whenever you confess your sins, and hope to obtain pardon of them. If your Confessor thinks it necessary to give you a reproof, be silent, and receive his admonitions with humility. If he tells you that he cannot absolve you, and that you must return to him in eight or fifteen days, obey him, and do not seek absolution at once.†

400 NECESSARY QUALITIES OF CONFESSION.

12. In the fifth place, our Confession should be *sorrowful*—that is, made with a feeling of grief and regret for the sins we confess—accusing ourselves with the sentiments and disposition of a criminal before his Judge. The declaration of our sins should have every mark of sorrow and regret. We should not confess them with carelessness or indifference, as we would subjects of everyday occurrence; but, in acknowledging our guilt, our language should be that of one whose heart is bursting with grief for the injury done to God and to himself by his many offences. In confessing our sins, let us imitate the Publican mentioned by our Lord in the Gospel, who would not so much as lift up his eyes, but, striking his breast, said, in tones of sorrow: “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner”—*St. Luke*, xviii. 12. Let us, dear children, like him, confess our sins with sorrow and compunction. A *sorrowful* Confession will draw down on us God’s mercy, will cleanse us from all sin, will be to us a source of comfort in this world, and contribute to our eternal happiness in the world to come.†

Q. Are we obliged to confess not only the number of our sins, but also the circumstances of them?

A. Yes; we should confess the circumstances that change the nature of the sin, and also the circumstances that notably aggravate it.

13. Circumstances are certain conditions or accidental qualities which sometimes accompany an action, and render it good or bad in a greater or lesser degree. They are usually counted seven, and are comprised in the following words:—*Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando*. *Quis* means the person who did the action; *quid* means the action done; *ubi*, the place where it was done; *quibus auxiliis*, the instruments, the accomplices, or

the means made use of; *cur*, the end or motive; *quomodo*, the manner; and *quando*, the time. The circumstances of sin are of two kinds. The first are circumstances that change the nature or species of the sin; and the second are circumstances that *aggravate* the sin only. The circumstances that change the nature or *species* of sin are those which superadd a new and special malice to the sin. Hence it happens, sometimes, that one and the same action may be contrary to many commandments, or to many virtues, or to many obligations of the same virtue. An example will explain this: I steal ten guineas from my neighbour; I steal a chalice worth ten guineas out of a Church: the first action is simply theft, and is contrary to one virtue only—justice; the second action, by the circumstances, becomes sacrilege, and is contrary to two virtues—justice and religion. The *aggravating* circumstances are those which aggravate only the malice of the same action, without superadding any new sin or special malice to it. For instance, a man steals a pound: this is a mortal sin. He steals a hundred pounds: this circumstance of excess greatly *aggravates* the sin. One steals a small sum from a poor man, who, having no more, is rendered thereby incapable of supporting a large family of children: it is evident that this circumstance considerably aggravates the sin of theft.

14. A person is indispensably obliged to tell the circumstances that change the *species* of sin, otherwise he will not make a good Confession: for, if he does not declare these circumstances, his Confessor cannot judge properly of the nature and enormity of his sins, nor impose on him a suitable penance, justly proportioned to their enormity. Hence, a person who designedly conceals any circumstance of this kind, not only renders his Confession null and avoid, but

is likewise guilty of sacrilege, which adds considerably to his guilt.

15. On the same principles, and for the same reasons that the confession of the circumstances which we have just mentioned is judged necessary, it is likewise deemed necessary by the most eminent Divines, that we should tell in Confession the *notably aggravating* circumstances of sin. We should certainly confess an *aggravating* circumstance when it renders a sin a *reserved case*, and which, without that circumstance, would not be a *reserved case*. We should also confess an *aggravating* circumstance when there is question of restitution to be made, of satisfaction to be performed, or of a scandal to be repaired; otherwise, a Confessor could not, in such cases, give suitable directions to a penitent as to what he should do. *Aggravating* circumstances should necessarily be confessed when they make a sin mortal, which, without them, would only be venial; as, for example, a person stealing a halfpenny, who had an intention at the same time of stealing a very large sum. This is what we are taught by the Catechism of the Council of Trent. "With the bare enumeration of our mortal sins", says the Catechism, "we should not be satisfied; that enumeration we should accompany with the relation of such circumstances as considerably aggravate or extenuate their malice. Some circumstances are such as of themselves to constitute mortal guilt; on no account or occasion whatever, therefore, are such circumstances to be omitted"—*On Penance*.

Q. Is it necessary to confess venial sins?

A. No; but it is good and useful to confess them.

16. The Council of Trent has decided that it is not absolutely necessary to confess venial sins, in order

to obtain pardon for them, because venial sins do not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and because there are other means of expiating them besides a Sacramental Confession. But the same Council adds, that, so far from its being a presumption to confess venial sins, as Luther advanced, on the contrary, it is extremely good, useful, and laudable to confess them. This is the doctrine of all our Divines, and is confirmed by the practice of all the Saints with whose lives we are acquainted. St. Francis of Sales, in particular, recommends strongly this practice to all persons who aspire to Christian perfection. He tells us, in his "Introduction to a Devout Life", that when we confess our venial sins with true contrition for having committed them, and with sincere resolution of not committing them again, we receive not only absolution from them, but also great strength to avoid them for the future, great light to perceive and know them, and powerful grace to repair the losses our souls sustained by them. "By this one action of confessing", says the Saint, "we practise the virtues of humility, obedience, simplicity, and charity : in a word, more virtues than we could well practise in any other action whatsoever". And another reason can be given, why we should confess venial sins ; and that is, the difficulty in many cases, of not being able to discriminate exactly whether our sins be mortal or venial. St. Augustine says, "that in many cases it is very difficult to find out, and most dangerous to determine absolutely, what sins are mortal and what venial. For my part", continues the Saint, "I was never able to determine this in all cases".

17. On the other hand, it is necessary to say that if a person confess only venial sins, without due contrition and a firm resolution, his confession would be null, void, and sacrilegious. It would be null and void for want of contrition, because contrition is

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an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance; it would be sacrilegious, because such a Confession would be a profanation of the Sacrament. Hence, a person who confesses venial sins only, is in great danger of committing a grievous sin, for want of due contrition for them and a firm resolution of never committing them again, for a firm resolution is inseparable from true Contrition, and constitutes a necessary part of it, and neither mortal nor venial sins can ever be forgiven, without our wills being entirely detached from it. To speak in plain terms, is it not insulting God, is it not mocking Him, to ask His pardon for faults for which we are not sorry, and which we are not resolved to avoid, and to which we still retain an affection? When we confess, therefore, our venial sins, let us always endeavour to excite in our souls true contrition for them, and a firm resolution of not committing them again; and let us, at the same time, persuade ourselves, that we have neither the necessary contrition nor resolution, if we are always relapsing into them, if our lives are not reformed nor amended with respect to them—if we do not avoid the occasions of them—if we do not make use of the means prescribed for overcoming them—and if we do not make proper efforts not to fall into them.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CONFESSION SALUTARY AND NECESSARY

* The Catholic Church received from Christ, our Lord, a two-fold mission. That mission the world is unwilling to recognize; but that mission it is the destiny of the Church of God to fulfil until the end of time. The mission has in it a two-fold character. To sinners; to those who are in darkness it brings light; to those who are dead in the corruption of

sin it brings the life of the purifying influence of Divine grace. That is clear in this two-fold mission ; perfectly clear from the words of Christ to His Apostles : " You are the light of the earth ", He said, "*Vos estis lux mundi* : You are the light of the world ". Then, turning to them, on another occasion, He said : " And you are the salt of the earth ". the light to illumine the world's darkness ; the salt to heal and purify the world's corruption. The first of these missions the Church of God fulfils in her teaching ; for the Psalmist said, with truth : " The declaration of Thy word, O God, brings light and intelligence to Thy children ". And as it is the Church's destiny to be, until the end of time, the light of the world, so that light which is to come from her must be the very light of God ; therefore, the word of truth that creates that light can never die away from the Church's lips, nor, coming from those lips, can it ever be polluted by the slightest iota or admixture of error. She has the power given to her by the Lord not only to illumine them in their darkness, but to heal them in their corruption. What is that corruption, that infirmity, that defilement to which Christ alluded when He said to His Apostles : " Ye are the salt of the earth ; ye must be put upon the sore places of the world ; ye must be put upon the festering wounds of the world "? What are these sore places—these festering wounds ? They are the sores and wounds of sin in the soul. Sin is the sore spot of the soul. Sin is the awful ulcer of society. Sin it is that abounds everywhere. For it abounds in every circle—in the commercial circles, making a man untrustworthy and dishonest—in the domestic circle, making servants pilfer and steal—making masters and mistresses exacting and unjust—making children disobedient—making parents forgetful of their duties to their children—making the young man impure, and the married man unfaithful.

All these things—all these evils that are teeming around us, that meet us wherever we turn, that we cannot avoid seeing and hearing, be we ever so fastidious—they come under the very touch of our hands, and they disgust us with this life of ours. Then, we are fain to cry out with the Psalmist, " O God ! woe is me because my pilgrimage is here so long continued ! " All these things is the corruption of mankind ; and the power that the Church received when she was called " the salt of the earth ", is to purge away all this, to remedy all these evils, heal all these wounds, sweeten all that bitterness and remorse, all the corruption of society. All this she does through the Sacrament of Penance—through the Confessional. There is she truly the saviour of society, and the

world cannot do without her. How significant it is that, when Germany gave up the faith three hundred years ago, such was the immorality, such was the impurity that filled the community at once, that actually a German city was obliged to petition to have the Confessional or the Sacrament of Penance restored. All classes of society said: "The responsibility is gone—the yoke is removed from us; we need no longer betake ourselves to the task of looking up our sins, and weeping over them, and wailing over them, and taking measures of avoiding them, or incurring the pain of humiliation of confessing them". All this is gone; and then, like the Hebrews of old, they rose up, joined hands, and danced round the new-found idol—the golden calf of their own sensuality and wickedness. "You are the salt of the earth", He said to them. Oh, if the Catholic Church was not on this earth! If she were not here with her Sacraments to create purity and to preserve it, to create honesty and to enforce it, to bring home the full and entire responsibility of every man, and to him personally, to bring home to every soul the deformity of sin, the necessity of repenting individually for each and every sin, to shake every soul in her Sacrament of Penance from the lethargy of sin; oh, I protest, my friends, I believe if the Catholic Church were not here, operating upon her millions throughout the world, to do this, that long before this time the chariot of human society, rolling down the steep hill of human infirmity, would have precipitated the whole world into destruction and death.—*The Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

GOD'S POWER MANIFESTED IN THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

† And now, when we pass from the action of Christ to His Church, what do we find? We find, dearly beloved brethren, in all the works of God in His Church, in all her Sacraments, a union of the same attributes. For, nowhere, in no Sacrament, in no action of God, do we find power and mercy so magnificently shown forth, and so wonderfully blended into one act, as in the act by which the sinner is saved and absolved from his sin. First of all, consider the power of God. Almighty God showed His omnipotence first of all in the Creation. He spoke over the darkness and the void of space, and He said—"Let there be light", and light was made in an instant. The sun shone forth in the heavens, and the moon caught up her reflected glory from him. The stars sprang forth like clustering gems in the firmament newly created, and the whole world was flooded with the blessed light which

sprang into existence at the word of God. Then followed the same imperative, omnipotent command—the same *fiat*—and at the sound of the expression of God's will, Life came out of Death, as light out of darkness; beauty out of chaos; order out of disorder; and all the series of worlds took up their position in their respective places in creation, and began that hymn of harmony and praise which has resounded before Him for six thousand years. How great, how wonderful is the word that God spoke and by which He would effect such great things! Yet St. Augustine tells us that the words by which the Priest says to the sinner, “I absolve thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”; and which, at their sound, cleanse that sinner's soul from all his sins, bring him forth from out the grave---bring him forth from out the darkness of his sins, into the light of God's grace; from defilement into purity; from death into life; that that word is simply, infinitely more powerful than the word—the *fiat*—by which Almighty God created the world. Infinitely more powerful, and why? Because, when God, in the beginning of creation, stood, as it were, upon the threshold of Heaven, and from Heaven's brightness sent forth the word, there was nothing in that chaotic space over which His word was sped that could resist the action of His word. There was nothing there. He made all things out of nothing; but the original nothingness, therefore, could not resist the action of God.

Nor is there in Heaven, nor upon the earth, nor in hell anything that can resist the action of God, except one thing; and that one thing is the obstinate will and the perverse heart of the sinner. The will of man alone can say this to the Almighty God, “Omnipotence, I defy thee!” And why? It is not that God could not, if He so willed it, annihilate that will; but He does not will it. It is because the Almighty God, by an eternal law, respects that freedom of man's will, so that if that will resist Him freely, Omnipotence itself is powerless before that will. Such being the decree of the law of the will of man, the heart of man alone, the will of man alone, can offer such an obstacle to the Almighty God's action. Even in His omnipotent power, God must yield, because He cannot gain a victory without destroying that freedom which He has sworn by an eternal law to respect.—
V. Rev. Thos. Burke, O.P.

PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THE CONFESSIONAL.

† Thus it is, that from the confessional spring those virtues by which man acts upon his fellow-man. The index virtue is purity; and the next virtue in relation to our fellow-man is honesty. The third virtue is charity. And behold how the Confessional acts here. If a man speaks badly of his neighbour; if he ruins that neighbour's character or reputation; if he gets that neighbour thrown out of some lucrative employment by his whisperings or his tales—he goes to confession; he says, I am sorry for the sin I have committed; but I have a difficulty—and he finds perhaps to his astonishment that the priest will say to him—“There is another difficulty”: until he makes good that man's character, there is no absolution for him; until he has swallowed the lie he has told, there is no pardon for him; until he has restored to his neighbour the fair name and fame of which, by his whispering and enmity and injustice, he had robbed him, there is no pardon for him. What greater, what stronger motive could there be to make a man withdraw his words; to preserve him from detraction; to make him measure well his words before he inflicts an injury on his neighbour, than that of knowing that if he gives way to this mean jealousy or enmity, if he says these things or publishes them, even though men may forget it, God will not forget it in the interests of his neighbour? “To communion”, this man must say, “I cannot go, nor cross the threshold of the kingdom of Heaven, until I have gone out and swallowed this lie that I have told”.

And so, pursue our relations to each other, to society, and to those around us, into every detail of social life, and you there will find the Church following you, guiding your footsteps by her light, preserving your souls from sin, or touching them with a healing hand if you have fallen into sin. If the whole world were Catholic—and I will conclude with this sentence—if the whole world were Catholic, and that all men consented to go regularly to the sacraments and to approach worthily to the Sacrament of Penance, this alone would put an end to all sin. There would be no more sin. There would be no more heart-breaking; no more tears; no more terrific records of robberies and murders; no more women hardening their hearts and making them more ferocious than the tigress when she devours and tears her young; no more of that cautious, cold, calculating dishonesty—men casting their wiles about each other like a spider's web to entrap each other; no more misery in this world; all would be happiness, if

men would only open their festering souls, and let in the salt of the power and of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Thus do we behold the action of the Confessional on society. Oh, my friends, let us pray that God may enlighten those who, without the pale of the Catholic Church, go on from day to day, from year to year, adding sin to sin, and bearing the accumulated burden of their sins before the eternal judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Whilst we pray for them, oh, let us, like good men and true, enter into those privileges and graces which we enjoy, cleansing our souls from sin, preserving them in their purity by the frequent application of grace, which destroys those sins at the beginning, and by frequent confession and Holy Communion, build up our souls upon the grace of graces and strength of strengths, until we are gathered in the fulness of the years of our manhood into the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What should we first do when about to confess
2. In what way should we make our Confession?
3. What should we do when we have accused ourselves of our sins?
4. What do you mean by saying that Confession should be entire?
5. In order that Confession should be entire, should we confess the different sorts of sin?
6. In what way should Confession be simple?
7. In what way should Confession be sincere?
8. Describe the way in which a bad Confession is made.
9. When can a person mention the sin of others in Confession?
10. In what way should a Confession be humble?
11. Why should our Confession be humble?
12. What is meant by Confession being sorrowful?
13. What do you mean by the circumstances of sin?
14. Is one obliged to confess the circumstances changing the species of the sin?
15. Should we confess the circumstances considerably aggravating the sin?
16. What is the doctrine of the Council of Trent, and what

the teaching of St. Francis of Sales, with regard to the Confession of venial sins?

17. Does the Confession of venial sins require true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment?

PRACTICE.

1. Always confess your sins with humility, sincerity, and candour, recollecting that you are confessing them to God.

2. Let your sorrow in Confession be such as to show that you are determined on a change of life.

3. Confine yourself not to the Confession of mortal sins, but also confess venial sins.

PRAYER.

O Lord! we thank thee for Thy great love and goodness towards us at all times, and in particular for Thy great favour in instituting the Sacrament of Penance. We know now, that by a sincere and candid avowal of sins in the tribunal of Penance, we shall obtain the remission of all our transgressions. Grant, dear Lord, that we may always confess with the proper dispositions, and that we may never be wanting in sincerity and humility, when we come before Thee to confess our guilt, and demand pardon for our crimes of Thy great mercy. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON CONCEALING A MORTAL SIN IN CONFESSION.

Q. What do you think of those who conceal a mortal sin in Confession?

A. They commit a most grievous sin, by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost; and instead of obtaining pardon, they incur much more the wrath of God.—*Acts, v.*

1. Would to God ! dear children, that the crime of concealing a mortal sin in Confession was as rare and unheard-of among Christians as it is grievous in itself, and alarming from the most dreadful effects resulting to those who are guilty of it. It is unhappily but too common among false penitents—and particularly among simple and young people, because they know not how grievous a sin it is, and the dreadful consequence it draws after it. You must know, that willingly to “conceal a mortal sin in confession”, that you believe to be mortal, is “a grievous sin”; because our Saviour, giving to the Apostles, and their successors, the power to *retain* or *remit* sins, has also obliged the faithful to confess all the sins which, after a sufficient examen, they remember. Therefore, to “conceal a mortal sin in Confession”, is a formal disobedience to the law of Jesus Christ in a matter of the highest concern, and is in itself “a most grievous sin”, as it includes sacrilege, hypocrisy, ingratitude, and a lying to the Holy Ghost.

2. One who conceals a mortal sin in Confession is, in the first place, guilty of sacrilege, and sacrilege of the worst kind ; for he abuses a Sacrament instituted by Christ to restore grace to the soul, and to reconcile us to Himself. Now, in making a sacrilegious Confession, a person provokes God by those very means He has appointed to appease Him—he makes Him his enemy at the very same time that he goes to make his peace with Him ; and he changes the Sacrament, which is a sentence of forgiveness, into a sentence of condemnation. But what is still more—this sacrilege is generally the forerunner of another of a much blacker dye, that is, a sacrilegious Communion. In the second place, he is guilty of hypocrisy, in making use of a solemn act of religion to veil a sin—in masking a diabolical pride with a counterfeit humility—in affecting to be most reli-

giously devout, when he is most sacrilegiously wicked—and, finally, in pretending a repentance for his past sins, when he is both actually increasing his former guilt and designing soon after to add to it another most grievous sin. In the third place, he is guilty of ingratitude, in despising the greatest pledge of God's goodness towards him, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the designs of His mercy—nay, using His blessings as arms to fight against Him.

3. However, these are but the inseparable circumstances of this sin; but its peculiar malice consists in "telling a lie to the Holy Ghost". To understand this the better, it is to be observed, that when a Priest officiates in the sacred tribunal of penance, he acts there as God's representative and as the public minister of Jesus Christ. Now, whatever affront is offered to a public minister, especially when he acts as such, reflects upon him whose minister he is. So that the behaviour of a person presenting himself before the minister of Christ, is to be considered no otherwise than as if Christ Himself were visibly present to him; and, consequently, all dissimulation and double-dealing used with a Confessor, during the actual administration of his sacred function, is endeavouring to impose upon God Himself: and lying to the one is the same as lying to the other. And can you think of such a sin without horror? Is it not a crime that justly deserves to be detested with the greatest hatred and aversion? If Christ should manifest Himself visibly to you, durst you have the boldness to dissemble with Him, or to attempt to impose a lie on Him? And is it not the same affront, whether He be present to you in person, or in the person of His minister? For to lie to God's minister, is to lie to God Himself; as is declared by St. Luke, upon a certain occasion, wherein God thought fit to manifest His hatred to this sin by so severe

and exemplary a judgment, as struck the whole Church with terror and amazement.

4. I suppose you all guess I mean the dreadful end of Ananias and Saphira, who, having sold an estate, as other Christians had done, pretended to bring the whole price of it to St. Peter ; whereas, in effect, they had kept back some part of it for their own private use. But St. Peter, knowing, by divine revelation, the cheat they came to put upon him, was deeply wounded at heart ; and being moved with a just indignation, spoke thus to Ananias : “ Why has Satan tempted thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost ? for thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God ” — *Acts*, v. 4. Whereupon the unfortunate wretch, as one thunderstruck, fell down dead at St. Peter’s feet ; and a few moments after, his wife, who had been an accomplice with him in his crime, received the same reward of her hypocrisy. This, dear children, is the account given us by St. Luke of the exemplary judgment that befell this unhappy couple. And it is to be particularly observed, that St. Peter styles their sin a lying to the Holy Ghost ; for though he knew the cheat was immediately intended for, and practised upon himself, yet, inasmuch as he was Christ’s minister, he considered the offence as offered to God Himself, and the punishment was proportioned accordingly.*

5. However, you may observe, that in the case of these two persons so severely punished, there was neither sacrilege nor injustice, but the whole charge against them was lying and hypocrisy. Whereas, in the case of a false Confession, besides double dealing, dissimulation, hypocrisy, and lying to the Holy Ghost, there are, over and above a Sacrament profaned, God’s blessing abused, His mercy trampled upon, and the most effectual means of amendment turned into an occasion of greater sins. So that it plainly appears,

that the crime of a counterfeit penitent is far more grievous in itself, and, by consequence, more detestable in the sight of God, than the sin of Ananias and Saphira. But will God then let the wicked sinner, who is guilty of a false Confession, go unpunished? No, dear children; for though the criminal suffers no present punishment in the body, yet his soul falls under the malediction of God in the very instant he commits the sacrilege. So that, whilst his Confessor, acting according to the best of his knowledge, is pronouncing the words of absolution, Almighty God, who cannot be imposed upon, looks down upon him with indignation, and instead of cancelling the handwriting of sin that was against him, dooms his soul to an increase of torments answerable to the increase of guilt.

Q. Who is the promoter of the great crime of concealing a mortal sin in confession?

A. The devil is certainly the promoter of that great crime.

6. To “conceal a mortal sin in Confession”, is a crime of that nature that we cannot doubt but the devil himself is the great promoter of it. He has a double aim in tempting men to it: firstly, to gratify his own pride and malice, to which nothing is more insupportable than the humble confession of repenting sinners; and secondly, to perpetuate the slavery of those whom he has already in his power, well knowing that if he can firmly snare them by their concealing a sin in Confession, he is secure of them. You may, therefore, be well assured, dear children, that whenever the shame of confessing any sin begins to gain ground so far upon you as to cause you to deliberate whether you shall or shall not do your duty, it is the devil who suggests these dangerous thoughts; it is the mortal enemy of your souls who endeavours to

tie up your tongues, that the gate of mercy may be for ever closed against you ; it is the father of lies who makes you ashamed of what alone can procure a solid glory. “The devil”, says St. Chrysostom,* “inverts the order established by God, which is, that we should be ashamed to sin, and glory in confessing sin when committed. The devil inverts this order, and gives us a confidence to sin, and a shame to confess them”.

7. Whilst the devil tempts men to sin, it is his business to make them cast off all shame, shame being one of the greatest restraints which Almighty God has laid upon human nature. But when the sin is accomplished, and the party guilty of it begins to look back with a heavy heart upon the offence he has committed, then the devil returns upon him with a new snare ; for, instead of robbing him of shame, as before, he heightens it as much as he can ; and instead of concealing from him the deformity of his sin, he sets it in the broadest light before him, and represents it in the most frightful colours, not to raise in his heart a penitential abhorrence of it, but to overwhelm him with such an excessive confusion for what he has done, that the difficulty of confessing becoming insupportable, it may engage him in a desperate resolution of either neglecting the Sacrament of Penance—the only means left to secure his return to God—or, what is worse, to act the hypocrite, and impose upon his Confessor. This is the Devil’s ordinary stratagem, which has ever brought him in such a plentiful harvest of souls, that it is no wonder he should still continue to practise the same cheat upon us. But the greater wonder is, that Christians, who have the light both of faith and reason to guide them, should be so easily drawn into the snare, and induced to commit a sin attended with so many

* Hom. de Confess.

aggravating circumstances that we may properly call it a complication of many crimes wrapt up in one single act.†

Q. Is concealing a mortal sin in Confession the greatest folly?

A. Yes; for it is not only the addition of a most grievous sin, but also an act of weakness and folly.

8. To “conceal a mortal sin in Confession” betrays the greatest folly and weakness; for if by imposing upon your Confessor, you could at the same time deceive Almighty God—if by concealing your sins from the knowledge of man, you could also hide them from the all-seeing eyes of Jesus Christ—if your avoiding a momentary confusion in this life were a means to shelter you against eternal confusion hereafter—then, indeed, you would not altogether want encouragement to play the hypocrite, and deal unfairly with God’s minister: for though in so doing you might be taxed with irreligion and sacrilege, you could not, however, be accused of weakness and folly. But, alas! the case is quite otherwise. The ulcers of your soul, though ever so industriously concealed from the eyes of men, lie always exposed before the eyes of God—the very sin which you seek to hide from your Confessor is already registered in the great book of accounts; and nothing but an humble Confession of it can hinder it from appearing against you to your everlasting confusion, both at the hour of death and the great day of judgment. Is it not, then, an unaccountable folly, to refuse a compliance with a duty, when there is no prospect of advantage to encourage you to transgress against it; and your submitting to it being the only means to rescue you from everlasting evils?

9. Suppose a criminal, condemned to die, should have his pardon offered him by the king, on condi-

tion that he would discover his crime, in secret, to a judge appointed by him, would not he be thought to have lost his reason, if he should refuse to submit to such easy terms? All men would certainly pronounce him guilty of excessive madness and cruelty to himself. Yet this is the case of those who "conceal a mortal sin in Confession"; for Almighty God imposes no harder condition on sinners, and engages His word to deliver those who submit sincerely to it, from hell and from the endless miseries their sins have deserved. What madness, then, and infatuation is it, to reject so great a mercy, and not purchase pardon at so cheap a rate!

10. Alas! you are here afraid of a little confusion before a single man, and you reflect not that you must be exposed before a numberless multitude of men and Angels, before whom all the sins of your whole life will be laid open, which will throw so heavy a load of shame upon you, that you will even wish to sink into the ground, and hide yourselves in the darkest caverns, to avoid being seen. Your shame will attend you even for an eternity, and be as everlasting as those flames that will never be quenched. Whence I leave you to judge, whether Almighty God deals not very mercifully with you, in putting it into your power to change this terrible and everlasting confusion due to your sins, for a momentary humiliation before one single person, who, as you all know, is under the strictest obligation of an inviolable secrecy that human and divine laws can lay upon him; and whether your refusing to submit to such easy terms of reconciliation, be not a weakness and folly, rather to be expected from a man deprived of his senses, than from one who pretends to judgment and reason.

11. But here give me leave to ask a person guilty of this crime, what it is he proposes to himself. Does

he ever intend to confess the sins he has concealed, or does he not? If not, then he renounces all hopes of salvation, and resolves directly to damn himself. And what a desperate resolution is this, in one who believes there are eternal flames prepared for those who die in mortal sin! But if he resolves to confess them some time or other, why not sooner as well as later? Nay, why not at first as well as afterwards? For the longer he runs on in this course, the more difficult it will be for him to get out of it, because all the Confessions made since his first abuse of the Sacrament, being null and void, must be made over again. And is not the tearing open so many old sores, and the unravelling a conscience perplexed with the multiplicity of sins, a task that will put him to a much greater shame and confusion than what he would have felt at first? Is it not much easier, think you, to confess a single sin, though ever so grievous in itself, than when it comes attended with a long train of other sins, together with the additional sin of sacrilege? This, therefore, being the unavoidable consequence of sacrilegious Confessions, in relation to one who is not resolutely bent upon damning himself, it is evident, that all delays and put-offs in this matter cannot but increase the very difficulty upon which they are grounded, and serve to no other purpose than to cut out work for a more melancholy repentance and a more mortifying shame.†

12. But some, perhaps, will tell me that they depend upon an easier expedient, and that is, of making one Confession for all, upon their deathbeds; for then, at that time, say they, we need not care what the Confessor may think of us. But suppose this fine project should miscarry; suppose they should die suddenly, or be delirious, or out of their senses, in their last sickness—what then becomes of them?

Are they not lost without remedy? However, allowing them the fairest chance, it is too much to be feared, that they who confess not till they just feel themselves dropping into destruction, are so disposed at heart, that they would not confess even then, had they any prospect of a longer life; and they must give me leave to tell them, that a Confession made with this disposition, is but a very unsafe bottom to hazard their salvation upon. I say not this to encourage despondency in any one who should prove so unhappy as to have placed things upon the last hazard; because, whatever his case may be, endeavouring to repent and make his peace with God is certainly the best thing he can do at any time whatever; and the last moments of his life cannot be better employed, than in a work so necessary as that of confessing and repenting. However, I think myself bound to deter all here present from hazard-
ing their salvation upon so great an uncertainty, and letting things come to that pass, that a deathbed repentance is all they have to depend on. §

13. If any of you here present, dear children, be in that miserable state, I conjure you to look, and enter into yourselves, that you may discover the danger to which your salvation is exposed; to open your eyes, and awake from your lethargy. Consider, it is the Devil that deceives you, and excites in you that wicked shame, or that foolish fear, in order to bring about your eternal damnation, as he has done to many others of your age and condition. In a word, Almighty God is not to be mocked; and those who designedly put off the Confession of their sins till the hour of death, will, I fear, find, by woful experience, that they have only played the devil's game for him, and have been industrious in laying snares for their own souls. What, therefore, I recommend to you is, to beseech Almighty God to

preserve you from this fatal blindness, and to infuse into your souls the spirit of truth, that you may ever abominate all insincerity or double-dealing, so that you may return from the Sacrament of Penance with a clear conscience and with an assurance of having related all your sins and the circumstances of them—which is the greatest comfort in this life, and will be a powerful means of bringing you to eternal happiness in the next. ||

Q. What must persons do who did not carefully examine their consciences; or who had not sincere sorrow for their sins; or who wilfully concealed a mortal sin in Confession?

A. They must truly repent of all such bad and sacrilegious Confessions, and make them all over again.

14. Firstly, persons who, when preparing for Confession, “did not carefully examine their consciences”, that is, did not take the time and pains they reasonably should take, to discover their sins, and, through this negligence, forgot, and so omitted telling a mortal sin in Confession, “must truly repent of such bad and sacrilegious Confessions, and make them over again”. Secondly, persons “who had not sincere sorrow for their sins” when they confessed, make a bad Confession; for, as we have already said, no one can ever obtain pardon for his sins who had not sincere sorrow for them. A Confession, therefore, made without contrition or sincere sorrow, is “bad and sacrilegious”; and, therefore, persons “who had not sincere sorrow for their sins”, when making their Confession, “must truly repent of all such sacrilegious Confessions, and make them all over again”. Thirdly, persons “who wilfully conceal a mortal sin in Con-

fession", make "bad and sacrilegious Confessions"; for, as St. Thomas says, "to conceal willingly and knowingly, through fear or shame, a sin that one judges to be mortal, or doubts to be mortal, or to conceal the circumstances that change the species of the sin, or to conceal the number of these sins, is not really confessing, but pretending to confess". Therefore, all such persons "must truly repent of all such bad and sacrilegious Confessions, and make them over again". You must confess not only the sin which had been concealed, but also the other sins which had been confessed; for the Confession was "bad and sacrilegious", and so null and void.

Q. Should a person confess a sin of which he is doubtful, whether it be mortal or venial?

A. He certainly should.

15. When a person doubts whether a sin be mortal or venial, either because he has not sufficient reasons to prefer one opinion to the other, or because the reasons on both sides appear to him to be equal, that person should certainly confess that sin; for if he should omit or neglect to confess any such sin, he exposes himself to the danger of concealing a mortal sin in Confession, and consequently of making a sacrilegious Confession. Hence, the duty and obligation of a penitent is to confess his sin, such as it is, and leave the judgment of it to his Confessor. It is the Confessor's business to discriminate between sins, and to determine which are mortal and which venial.

Q. Should a person confess a sin that he doubts whether he ever committed it or not?

A. He certainly should.

16. A person should confess, as certain, sins which he is sure he has committed; he should also confess, as doubtful, sins which he is doubtful whether he has committed them or not; for he would be guilty of a grievous sin, if he confessed as certain, mortal sins which he was sure that he never committed. But, if afterwards he became certain that he committed some sins which he had before confessed as doubtful, he should then confess these sins over again, as certainly committed, because they were not confessed as they ought to have been in the former confession. Likewise, a penitent should confess a sin which he knows to be mortal, and which he knows he has committed, but which he is not sure he has confessed. The reason is, that when a person is sure of the obligation of any commandment, and when he is not sure that he has fulfilled that obligation, the commandment retains all its force, and must be complied with.

Q. What is the surest sign that our Confessions were good, and that we had sincere sorrow for our sins?

A. The amendment of our lives.

17. "The surest sign that our Confessions were good, and that we had sincere sorrow for our sins", is "the amendment of our lives". If hitherto we had been addicted to the vices of impurity, cursing, swearing, drunkenness; if hitherto we had been altogether negligent of the duties of a Christian—omitting Mass on Sundays, scarcely ever praying; but if since we had been at Confession we have laid aside these vices, and that from having been blasphemers, swearers, and cursers, we now speak reverently of God, bless Him and our fellow-creatures

—from having been drunkards, we are now sober and temperate—from having been impure, we are now become chaste—from having neglected hearing Mass on Sundays, and omitted prayer, we are now attentive to the performance of every Christian duty—from having been disobedient to our parents' commands, we are now submissive and docile; if this amendment has taken place in our lives, we may rest confident that we have made good Confessions; for the "amendment of our lives" is the surest sign that they have been good.

18. But if, on the other hand, we find by experience, that no change or amendment of life has followed from our Confessions, we have reason to suspect that our Confessions were not good. I do not mean, however, to say, that because a person falls sometimes into the same sins after Confession, that his Confession was sacrilegious and bad. A surprise, a strong and violent temptation, together with human frailty, may possibly overcome a penitent sinner, change his good will and earnest desires, and lead him into sin. But if, from time to time, from Confession to Confession, he still appears the same sinful man—still repeating the same mortal sins—still frequenting those places which had before been the occasions of his sin—scarcely ever taking measures against renewed falls—neglecting to make use of the remedies prescribed him—if, I say, this be his case, he has great reason to suspect that his Confessions were bad, and that he had not "sincere sorrow for his sins". A good Confession necessarily implies a sincere sorrow for the past, and a firm resolution of amendment for the future; but what reasonable grounds has he to believe that his sorrow for the past was sincere, and his resolution of amendment for the future firm, who continually relapses into those sins which he so often and solemnly renounced?

Q. What should we do after Confession ?

A. We should return God thanks, and diligently perform the penance enjoined by the Confessor.

19. When we have made our Confession, and returned to our place in the Church, we should again humble ourselves before God, "return" Him "thanks" for having permitted us to receive this life-giving Sacrament, by which we have received pardon of all our sins. We should also renew our contrition and firm purpose of amendment, and beg of Jesus Christ, through the intercession of His Blessed Mother, the grace of acting up to the resolutions we have made. If we have time, we should think of the advice of our director, and adopt the best means by which we will be enabled to keep our resolutions.

20. "After Confession", we "should diligently perform the penance enjoined by the Confessor"; for the performance of the penance ought to be exactly and faithfully complied with. No one should delay the performance of his penance, without sufficient reasons for doing so. He should perform it as soon as convenient, at least within the time prescribed to him by his Confessor. There is an obligation of performing the penance which was given to us ; and he who on set purpose, or by wilful negligence, fails to perform it, commits a sin ; and this sin is more or less grievous, according as the omission is more or less considerable. If it be but a slight omission, it is but a venial sin ; but if it be a considerable omission, as the omission of the whole penance, or the greater part of it, it may be a mortal sin—at least, it would be such if the penance were enjoined in satisfaction for mortal sins.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE GIRL WHO CONCEALED SINS IN CONFESSION.

* There was a girl living near Brussels, who went to Confession and Holy Communion every month. During her last illness, one day, she remained for some time with her eyes shut—lost, as it seemed, in deep thought. After a while she opened her eyes again, and sent for her sister. When her sister came, she said to her: “I am lost for ever!” “How foolish”, answered her sister, “it is for you to say so! You are dreaming”. “No”, said the dying girl, “I am not dreaming; I have just seen it”. “Seen what?” said the sister. “I have just seen the very place in hell which has been got ready for me”. Her sister then ran out of the room to fetch the Priest. In a short time the Priest came. He said: “Well, my child, what is the matter?” “I am lost”, she answered, “for ever. I have just seen the place in hell which has been got ready for me. I committed some sins when I was little, and I was always afraid to tell them in Confession”. Then, in presence of the Priest and others in the room, she mentioned what the sins were. “Now”, said the Priest, “I know what the sins were. You have only to accuse yourself of them in Confession, and they will be forgiven”. Her only answer was—“I am lost for ever”. “But”, said the Priest, “if you ask God to have mercy on you, He will forgive your sins”. “I know He will”, the girl said, “but I have abused His mercy so often, that I will not ask it any more”. The Priest stayed three days and three nights, trying to persuade the girl to confess her sins. It was of no use. She died with these words on her lips: “I am lost for ever. I have seen the place in hell which has been got ready for me”.—*Books for Children*.

THE SAD EFFECTS OF CONCEALING A SIN IN CONFESSION.

† A child went to the altar to receive the Holy Communion. When the child was receiving the Holy Communion, nobody could see any difference betwixt it and the other children. When it had received the Holy Communion it came back from the altar, and knelt down in its place. After kneeling there for a few moments, it fell down on the floor. Some people came to raise it up from the floor, but they found that its eyes were shut, and it could not speak. They carried the

poor child out of the chapel, and took it to a house that was near. The doctor was sent for, and he came and looked at the child, but he could not tell what was the matter with it. When the Holy Mass was finished, the Priest went over to the house where the child was. He looked into its pale face, and spoke to it. But the child made no answer; its eyes were still shut, and seemed to have no sense. The Priest stood there wondering what could be the matter with the child. All at once the child opened its eyes and said the words: "I made a bad Communion this morning. When I went to Confession, there was a great sin which I was afraid to tell, and I would not tell it". As soon as the child had said these words, it turned round and died.—*Books for Children.*

THE DYING GIRL WHO CONCEALED A SIN IN CONFESSION.

† In the life of Father John Ramirez, of the Society of Jesus, it is related that, while preaching in a certain city, he was called to hear the Confession of a girl who was dying. She was of noble birth, and had apparently led a holy life; she went frequently to Communion, fasted, and performed other mortifications. At death, she confessed her sins to Father Ramirez with many tears, so that he was greatly consoled. But, after returning to the college, his companion said that, while the young lady was making her Confession, he saw a black hand squeezing her throat. The father immediately returned to the house of the sick lady; but, before entering, he heard that she was dead. He then returned to his college; and, while he was at prayer, the deceased appeared to him in a horrible form, surrounded by flames, and bound in chains, and said that she was damned on account of a sin committed with a young man, which she voluntarily concealed in Confession through shame; and that at death she wished to confess it, but the devil induced her, through the same shame, to conceal it. After these words, she disappeared amid the most frightful howling and terrific clanking of chains.

THE DEVIL CONFOUNDED BY THE CONFESSION OF SINS.

§ A young person who was reputed pious, but who had not sufficient confidence in himself, neglected, in time of temptation, to have recourse to God by humble prayer. He fell, in consequence, into some sin, which he felt a strong disinclination to confess. But, regretting sincerely the sin which he had committed, he said to himself: "Whatever it may cost me, I will go at once to Confession, and will lay open my

heart to the minister of Jesus Christ". He went accordingly; but on his way he felt the disinclination to confess his sin return, and imagined he heard the devil say to him: "Whither are you going?" But he immediately, and with great courage and earnestness, replied: "I am going to confound you, and to cover myself with confusion". — *Lasausse.*

THE SEAL OF CONFESSION, AND ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE.

|| The Empress Jane, a princess ornamented with every virtue that could add dignity to her exalted position, selected as her confessor St. John Nepomucene, one of the canons of the church of Prague. Her husband, a person of very suspicious disposition, was desirous of knowing what she had confessed, and, one day, after she had made her confession, went to her confessor, requiring him to reveal what the empress had told him. The saint calmly replied that he could not reveal it; that the secret of confession was inviolable; and that what was made known in confession was the same as if it had never been revealed. The emperor was irritated, but kept a gloomy silence. Some days after, he sent for St. John, and endeavoured by flatteries, promises, and even threats, to induce him to reveal the confession of the empress. But all in vain. He then commanded that the saint should be treated with the grossest inhumanity; and being unable to extort a single word from him, and seeing that every means that he had hitherto employed was incapable of shaking his constancy, he at length threatened him with death unless he complied. "You can put me to death", said the saint, "but you shall not oblige me to reveal what was confided to me in confession". The emperor, being no longer able to restrain his fury, ordered St. John to be bound hands and feet, and cast into the river. The order was executed; the holy priest was drowned; but his body having been taken out of the water and buried, God was pleased to give public demonstration of the sanctity of his servant by innumerable miracles which were wrought at his tomb. — *Feller.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is concealing a mortal sin in Confession a great sin
2. Of what is one guilty who conceals a mortal sin in Confession ?
3. Why is concealing a mortal sin telling a lie to the Holy Ghost ?
4. What happened to Ananias and Saphira for telling a lie to the Holy Ghost ?
5. Is concealing a mortal sin in Confession more grievous than the lying of Ananias and Saphira ?
6. Why does the Devil tempt us to tell a lie in Confession ?
7. By what means does the Devil induce us to tell a lie to the Holy Ghost ?
8. Will concealing a mortal sin in Confession prevent it from being made known to God ?
9. Is it folly in a criminal to decline telling his crime to one person, if by telling it he should be pardoned ?
10. Is not a momentary shame here preferable to everlasting shame hereafter ?
11. What follows from concealing a mortal sin in Confession ?
12. What do you say of deferring to tell your sin until the time of death ?
13. What are the considerations that should induce us not to conceal a sin in Confession ?
14. If a bad Confession be made, how are we to repair it ?
15. Should we confess a sin which we doubt to be mortal ?
16. Should we confess a sin that we are in doubt of having ever committed ?
17. Is the amendment of our lives the best sign of a good Confession ?
18. If our lives be not amended, what does it denote ?
19. Should we return thanks to God, and pray to Him, after Confession ?
20. When, and in what manner, should we perform our penance ?

PRACTICE.

1. Firmly resolve never to conceal a sin in Confession ; for a sin concealed is always a thorn in the conscience.
2. Frequently pray to God to give you the grace of confessing your sins sincerely.

3. After Confession, listen with docility to the instructions of your Confessor, and receive absolution with humility and fervour.

PRAYER.

We have been taught, O Jesus! the necessity of confessing our sins with all candour and sincerity. The frightful sacrilege committed by him who conceals a mortal sin in Confession, we now fully understand, and understanding it, we detest and abhor that crying sin. If, dear Lord, we have hitherto profaned the Sacrament of Penance by a bad Confession, we now regret the sacrilege, and promise Thee, that for evermore we shall always make the necessary preparation for that healing Sacrament, and receive it with proper dispositions. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

Q. What do you mean by the penance enjoined by the Confessor?

A. The prayers and other good works which he enjoins on penitents for certain sins.

1. "The prayers and other good works" which the Confessor enjoins on penitents in satisfaction for their sins is called "the penance enjoined by the Confessor". This Satisfaction, which we call "penance", is a necessary part of the Sacrament of Penance. There are two kinds of Satisfaction—one called *intended* Satisfaction, or the desire of doing penance to satisfy the justice of God for our sins; the other, called *actual* Satisfaction, or the real accomplishment of the penance imposed for our sins.

2. *Intended Satisfaction*, or the desire of satisfying God for our sins, and repairing, as far as we can, the injury done to Him by sin, is an essential part of true repentance, and therefore is absolutely required for the validity of the Sacrament of Penance ; for true contrition necessarily includes a firm purpose of observing all God's Commandments ; but to repair the injury offered to God by sin, is certainly one of these Commandments. Consequently, a desire and intention of satisfying God for sins committed, is absolutely necessary in order to obtain the remission of them.

3. *Actual Satisfaction*, or the real performance of our penance, is not an essential part of the Sacrament, nor is it necessary for receiving the grace of the Sacrament, but only for its *integrity*, that is, the Sacrament would be incomplete without it, but not invalid without it. Hence, in administering this Sacrament, a penance is enjoined by the Priest, and accepted by the penitent, before absolution is given him ; but the actual performance of the penance is deferred for some time. And for this reason also absolution may be given to a dying person without enjoining any penance at all ; and such a person validly receives the Sacrament of Penance, though he is not able to perform any satisfaction for his sins. Hence, a penitent who is incapable of performing the penance imposed on him is excusable before God for not having performed Satisfaction, as he had a sincere desire of performing it. *Actual satisfaction*, therefore, is not essentially required for the validity of the Sacrament of Penance.

4. The penance or Satisfaction which a sinner imposes on himself, though most useful, however, does not constitute a part of the Sacrament of Penance ; as it is only the Satisfaction which the Confessor imposes on the penitent, after Confession, that can be truly

sacramental Satisfaction. This Satisfaction was meant to repair the injury done to God by sin, and to compensate for the greater punishment which the sinner had merited. It derives its merit and efficacy from the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, applied to us in the Sacrament of Penance. Hence it follows clearly, that the Satisfaction imposed by a Priest in the Confessional is much more useful and efficacious than any satisfaction a penitent can lay on himself, because the Satisfaction imposed in the Confessional derives its merit and efficacy, not only from the good dispositions of the penitent, but also from the force, strength, and nature of the Sacrament itself. Hence, such satisfactions have a twofold merit : the merit they derive from the dispositions of the penitent, and the merit they derive from the Sacrament itself. And hence, also, they are more efficacious and more satisfactory on account of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the ordinary Sacramental Penance enjoined on penitents ?

A. Prayers and other good works, such as fasting and alms-deeds.

5. The sacramental Satisfaction, or “penances”, imposed on penitents, are, and should be, agreeable to God. They should be also painful and humiliating to man ; for, as a sinner indulged himself in some criminal gratification by committing sin, so it is but bare justice, that, to expiate this sin and to satisfy God, he should submit to some pain and trouble. And as, by daring to sin against God, he wished to raise himself above the condition of a creature, so it is but just that, for his pride and disobedience, he should submit to some humiliation. Both these are clearly marked out in the Apocalypse : “Multiply his torments and his pains, in proportion

as he indulged his pride and his pleasures". All sacramental satisfactions may be reduced to, and classed under, three general heads—prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds. The angel Raphael said to Tobias: "Prayer, accompanied with fasting and alms, is better than to heap up gold and treasure".*

6. By *prayer* is meant all kinds of mental and vocal prayer—the offering to God of all our actions, works, and labours—the offering to God all the miseries and calamities sent to us by Divine Providence in this life, such as poverty, sickness, and persecutions; for the Council of Trent clearly teaches that all kinds of affliction contribute greatly to satisfy for our sins, if we accept them as coming from the hands of God, bear them with patience and with conformity to the Divine will, and offer them up to Him, in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ. By prayer, also, are meant all kinds of ejaculations and aspirations to God—assisting at Mass, sermons, instructions—pious reading, and pilgrimages.†

7. *Fasting* means not only abstaining from meat and all nourishing food, but signifies also all kinds of corporal austerities and mortifications, such as eating dry bread, making use of no liquid but water—abstaining from all sweetmeats, dainties, and delicacies—depriving a person's self of some lawful pleasures that he could sometimes enjoy, from seeing, hearing, and smelling—lying on the bare ground, or on a hard bed—kneeling a long time before a crucifix, with the body bent towards the ground—not wearing rich clothes—keeping away from feasts and gaieties—making a retreat. To these external mortifications may be added interior mortification, such as renouncing a person's will, submitting to the will of another, and bearing, for the love of God, all the injuries, insults, and contempts that we receive.‡

8. By *alms-deeds* are meant all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, such as giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, lodging to those that want it, visiting prisoners and the sick, dressing the wounded, ransoming captives, and burying the dead. The spiritual ones are, to instruct the ignorant, to correct sinners, to comfort the afflicted, to advise those who want it, to protect those who are persecuted unjustly, to pardon injuries, to pray for the living and the dead, and for our enemies. When these spiritual and corporal works of mercy are performed with a true spirit of charity, they are extremely efficacious in satisfying for our sins, and in obtaining mercy from God. §

Q. Why is the Confessor obliged to impose penance on the penitent?

A. Because in the Sacrament of Penance he performs the duty of judge, and, therefore, should impose that satisfaction for sin which God requires.

9. A Confessor should impose penance on a penitent, because, in administering the Sacrament of Penance, the Priest acts as judge, commissioned by Almighty God so to reconcile sinners with Him, that while he dispenses to the penitent sinner the fruits of His Divine mercy, he does not neglect the interests of His Divine justice. Now, the order of justice requires that a criminal be punished in a just proportion to his guilt, and that this punishment be inflicted by a judge. Again, as the absolution granted in the Sacrament of Penance delivers the sinner not only from the guilt of his crimes, but also from the eternal punishment due to them—which, through the mercy of God and merits of Christ, is changed into a temporal punishment—therefore, that the Divine justice may be in some measure

satisfied, it belongs to the Priest, by whose ministry this change is made, to inflict some temporal punishment on the penitent, to serve, at least in part, for what the Divine justice requires. And for another reason, also, the Confessor should impose a penance. When Jesus Christ gave power to the pastors of His Church—the power of loosing the sinner from his sins—He also, with the same breath, gave them power to bind him with penance: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven”, which also shows that the penitent is obliged, in the sight of God, to perform the penance laid on him.

Q. Will the penance enjoined in Confession always satisfy for our sins?

A. No; but whatever else is wanting may be supplied by indulgences and our own penitential endeavours.

10. It is a great and very common mistake, dear children, among penitents, to content themselves with only performing the “penance enjoined in Confession”, and to believe that they have done enough, when they have performed the penance, such as was “enjoined”, though being often far less than what it should be. It is the cause of many evils, and particularly of relapses into sin; for it is certain that if we did penance as we ought for our past offences, we should not so easily fall into sin again. Be assured, then, that you ought to perform other penances besides those that are “enjoined in Confession”, because they will not “always satisfy for sin”.

11. Nothing is more certain than that every offence deserves punishment; and the greater the offence, the

greater should be the punishment. St. Cyprian says, the more we have offended, the more we ought to weep; and let the penance, he says, be no less than the crime: the greater the crime, the greater should be the satisfaction. Satisfaction being an act of justice, it should, therefore, bear some proportion to your offences. But if you consider the infinite majesty of God, who is provoked by your sins—if you reflect on your own ingratitude, on so many benefits and favours which you have slighted, on so many graces which you have abused, you cannot possibly imagine that such short and light penances as are commonly enjoined in the Sacrament of Penance bear any proportion to your offences. You have, perhaps, deserved to be for ever punished with the Devils in Hell, as you have ungratefully rebelled against God, preferred your own will and pleasure before the will and pleasure of the Almighty. Perhaps you are guilty of several mortal sins: and can you think that a few short prayers, said perhaps with little or no attention, are sufficient to satisfy and atone for the guilt of so many crimes? Is this to bring forth fruits worthy of penance?

12. If we look into the penitential canons, to know what was the ancient discipline of the Church for many years with regard to the penance to be performed by penitent sinners, we shall find several years of severe austerities in sackcloth and ashes, and many years of prayer and fasting, enjoined by the ministers of the Church, and practised by all that were truly penitent for their sins. Such was the practice and discipline of the Church for many ages; and you may assure yourselves, although the Church has judged it expedient to moderate the severity of her ancient discipline by condescending to the weakness of her children now-a-days, yet sin is no less offensive to Almighty God, for the justice of God is

always the same. No less punishment is due to sin now than in former times; nay, if our crimes are greater and more numerous than theirs who lived in those pure times, our penance and satisfaction ought to be greater, according to what Almighty God prescribed to Moses in Deuteronomy: "The number of stripes shall be according to the greatness of the offence"—*Deuteronomy*. It is what we are again taught in the Revelations of St. John: "As much as the sinner has indulged himself, and followed his unlawful pleasures, so much in proportion shall he be tormented and punished in this world or the next"—*Apocalypse*.

13. Though "the penance enjoined in Confession" does not "satisfy for our sins", as we have seen, yet "whatever else is wanting may be supplied by indulgences and our own penitential endeavours". An "Indulgence", as we shall see in the following chapter, supplies the want of suitable and proportionate satisfaction for sin. And what may be wanting after "the penance enjoined in Confession", can, too, be supplied by our own voluntary "penitential endeavours", that is, by imposing on ourselves some spiritual work to perform every day—at one time a recital of some prayers; at other times a distribution of alms; again, abstinence or a retrenchment of some lawful pleasure.

14. Besides these, you ought to endeavour to satisfy the divine justice for the sins you have committed, by suffering all the pains and evils which daily befall you, such as the inconveniences of life, the disorders of the body, the troubles of mind, disgust, loss of goods, poverty, distress, affliction, either public or private, and generally all the evils which occur, and with which life so much abounds. All these afflictions and troubles, though they happen to you against your will, yet, by receiving them in the

spirit of penance, and enduring them patiently, because of your offences to God, become a grateful sacrifice and a powerful means to "satisfy for our sins".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE VOLUNTARY PENANCES OF THE CISTERCIANS.

* The monastery of La Trappe is situated in a forest in Perche, near Normandy. It consisted, in 1746, of sixty lay brothers and novices, and fifty-seven choir members, of whom eighteen were priests, three oblates or extern lay brothers, who are allowed to speak on necessary occasions. One of these opens the door to strangers, prostrates himself before them, and then leads them first to the chapel, and, after a short prayer, into a parlour; but desires them, while within the monastery, to refrain from speaking of news. Only the abbot, prior, or guest-master is allowed to speak to them. The monks are never allowed to speak to visitors, nor to one another, otherwise than by signs, except it be to their superior or confessor. They never write to their friends in the world after their profession, nor hear anything relating to them or the world; being content to know there is a world, that they may pray for it. When the parent of any monk dies, the news is sent only to the superior, who tells the community that the father of one of them is dead, and orders their joint prayers for his soul. The monks till the ground themselves. They usually keep their eyes cast down, and never look at strangers, but make them a low bow if they pass by. This circumstance it is that made Pope Innocent III. call St. Bernard's monastery the wonder of the world. The recollection of the monks of La Trappe in the fields, at work, at meals, and particularly in the church, is a most moving spectacle.

THE MEANING OF PRAYER.

† First of all, let me define to you what I mean by Prayer. Some men imagine that Prayer means saying your prayers. Speak to them about Prayer, let the Confessor in the Con-

fessional ask them about Prayer, and they are perfectly satisfied if they are able to say : " O Father, I say my prayers". Now, my brothers, in the minds of many men, it is a far different thing to pray, and merely "say your prayers". Many a man kneels by his bedside in the morning, and says five " Our Fathers" and " Hail Marys", never once thinking of what he is saying, but quite satisfied if he gets over them ; there is no thought, no earnestness, no fixed purpose in his prayer. In the evening, before he lies down, he says a few " Our Fathers" and " Hail Marys", in the same rapid, distracted, listless manner ; and between the morning and the evening prayers there is not a single thought of God. God is as completely forgotten during the long day as if He did not exist at all—not a moment of recollection, not one moment of sense of the Divine Presence during the day ; and yet that man imagines that he prays, because he "says his prayers". This is not the Prayer about which I am going to speak to you ; not at all. Amongst the complaints that Almighty God made of His people there was one, and it was this : " This people", He said, " honour Me with their lips ; but their heart is far, far from Me". What do you think was the curse He put upon them for that ? He said : " Their prayer shall be turned into a sin". That is the most fearful of all—that a man's prayer, instead of being answered by the Divine Mercy, should be turned into a sin, and flung back upon him ! No, my dear brothers, the prayer of which I speak is the elevation of the heart, soul, and spirit to God—a conscious communication with God—an earnest, impassioned petition to God ; the prayer which penetrates a man's whole being, which is performed as the most important of all duties—nay, more, which, performed in the morning, remains hovering over the man's soul the whole day, and takes the form of habitual and almost constant communication with God. I speak not of the occasional practice of prayer, but the spirit of Prayer, which makes a man's life a life of prayer. This is what our Lord said : " You must always pray". Mark the word—you must *always* pray. It seems a strange and unreasonable thing. How can we always pray ? Can a man be on his knees from morning till night, or does God expect it ? Can a man withdraw his thoughts entirely from his business, from the concerns of his family and everything, in order to fix them on God constantly, as did St. Simon Stylites on his pillar, or St. Anthony in the desert ? No, Almighty God does not require that ; but Almighty God requires, notwithstanding, that we should always pray—that we should throw the spirit of prayer over our whole life. How is this

done? It is done by that easy and most salutary practice of trying, from time to time, frequently throughout the whole day, to remember the presence of God, and make a short interior prayer. For instance, a man is at his work—a carpenter at his bench, the mason on the scaffold; cannot he, while at work, think from time to time? The eye of God is watching, bending down upon me. Cannot he say then in his heart: “O my God, keep me in Thy holy grace. O my God, I love Thee. O Lord Jesus Christ, I offer this work to Thee. If it is worth Thy acceptance, accept of it”. Such aspirations, that sense of the presence of God, frequently recalled—hovering round him like a guardian angel—in that way may a man fulfil literally the precept: “You must always pray”. For he thus sends the golden thread of prayer through every action of his life, passing it hither and thither until his life is an uniform and continuous prayer. The advantage of that is, the sense of the presence of God frequently recalled, that offering of his actions, those aspirations frequently made, preserve a man from temptation. He lives in an atmosphere of God—he lives in a charmed circle of sanctity, into which the ruder demons of the grosser sins never dare intrude.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE DIET OF THE CISTERCIANS.

† The drink of the Cistercian monks is a weak cider, such as is used by the poorest people in Normandy. On fast days they eat only dry herbs, boiled with a little salt, with a piece of coarse bread, and are allowed half a pint of cider. On other days they have vegetable soup, a dessert of a radish or two, a few walnuts, or some such thing, and a mess either of lentils, roots, hasty puddings, or the like. They never eat fish on any account, and never touch eggs or flesh meat unless when very sick, but sometimes use milk. They practise a general mortification of their senses. When they come to the fire in winter they stand at some distance from the calefactory, and never put out a foot or raise up their habits to warm themselves, nor stay long in that place. Even in their sickness the superior often treats them harshly, in order to increase their humility and patience; and the monks under the greatest pains reproach themselves as faint penitents, and add many voluntary mortifications. At their dying hour they are carried to the church, laid on ashes, and there receive the last Sacraments, and often remain in that situation till they expire. They work in the fields many hours in the day, but join prayer with their labour. Their church duties

are very long ; and during the whole day no one is out of sight of some others, to take away all possibility of sloth. They lie on straw beds. The lightest faults are most severely punished in chapter.—*Alban Butler.*

ALMS DEEDS SATISFY FOR OUR SINS.

§ Not content with creating us, God redeemed us ; not content with redeeming us, God substantiated Himself under the form of bread and wine, and remains for all time in our tabernacles ; and not content with this abiding in the tabernacles, the adorable Heart of Jesus went out of Him, as it were. He beheld the mystery of poverty, misery, and weakness which should remain for ever upon this earth, for He Himself said, "The poor you have always with you". He knew their misery and helplessness, and what did He do ? Oh ! He came to their aid—as God alone can—in a manner worthy of God ; and His Sacred Heart went out of Him into the poor. He took His stand in the midst of them, and said, "While there is faith on earth my children shall be cared for ; while there is hope in the breast of the faithful man, my children shall be tended ; while there is charity upon earth, my poor shall not be neglected ; for I will identify myself with them, and I will proclaim to the world—to those who believe, and hope, and love—that whatever they wish to administer to me they can do it, and find me in the person of my poor". There is the test the mercy of Jesus Christ provided ; a strong remedy for a great evil ; an abiding remedy for an abiding want. He takes His place among the poor, and He says, "Man of faith, I will disguise my omnipotence under the form of helplessness, and I will disguise my riches under the form of poverty ; and I tell you, in the name of my poor, that whatsoever you do unto them, you do also unto me".

Behold, then, dearly beloved, the great mystery concerning the needy and the poor. At first sight it might seem strange to us that mercy alone, according to the word of Jesus Christ, is made the crucial test that shall decide man's fitness for heaven. Have you ever reflected on the great Judgment scene described by our Divine Lord ? There assembled before Him shall be the vast herd of mankind—His elect on His right hand, and on His left the reprobate, who are to be cast away, never to behold the face of God again. Then, in the cloud of majesty shall the Son of God come to solve for ever the problem of the destinies of the whole race of mankind, and to vindicate His own action and His own sentence

upon them. In that day mercy, and mercy alone, shall be made the test of man's fitness to enter the kingdom of Heaven. To those upon His right hand will the Awful Judge say: "Come, ye thrice blessed of my Father in Heaven. Come, ascend with me into the realms of everlasting glory. Come, and behold the Kingdom that my Father hath prepared for you. For I say unto you, this is not the first time you and I met. I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was houseless and homeless, and you took me in". And they, wondering (to use the word of Scripture)—wondering at the suddenness of their own unexpected salvation, dazzled by the glory that is already gleaming upon them, and ravished in heart by the mere contemplation of that happiness which shall be their unexpected destiny for ever—they all cry out: "Lord God! awful and adorable Lord! we accept Thy blessing, but we cannot understand Thy praise. When wert Thou, O awful God, hungry? When did we ever take Thee in? O Saviour Christ, when was this?" And He, turning to the poor, will say to His elect: "Do you recognise these? Did you ever see these faces before?" "Yes, Lord, these we saw, but not Thy face. There were tears in these eyes when we saw them last. These hands were extended to us in trembling supplication when we saw them before. These heads were drooping with pain when we raised them up. These hearts were breaking when we whispered a word of consolation and pity in their ears. These we saw, O Lord, but not You". And then He will answer and say, "Come! come to the glory of my Kingdom; come to my Father's embrace; come to the light of God's everlasting happiness and glory. For, amen I say unto you, what you did to these you did unto me. I was amongst them; they were my representatives. What you did unto them you did unto me". Then turning to the reprobate, He will say to them: "Depart, O you accursed, for whom I laboured and prayed, and shed my blood in vain. Depart, you thrice accursed", into everlasting flames. But I will not send you away without assigning my reason. I will not condemn you eternally without giving you the reason of your condemnation. You saw me before. I came to you hungry, and you refused to give me to eat. I came to you naked, and your hands refused to clothe me. I was harbourless, and you refused to take me in". And they also, when their doom has come upon them, will cry out, "Lord, Lord, Saviour and God, ere you cast us away for ever, let us put in one plea. We swear before high heaven, had we seen

Thee we would never have let Thee pass hungry, or naked, or houseless, without ministering unto Thee. Oh, strong Son of God, where did we behold Thee in this pitiful plight?" And He, turning to the poor, will, answering, say: "Cast your merciless eyes upon these. Did you ever see them before?" The reprobate will answer: "Yes, Lord, we saw these. They were the pest and scourge of society. They were the nuisances that crossed our path, as we picked our fainty steps through the pleasant places of our daily life. These were the voices that grated upon our ears. But we could not bear the sight of their misery, nor could we listen to the cry of their want, nor the wail of their sorrow". "Then depart from me", our Lord will say, "depart from me into the heart of Hell; depart into everlasting flames. For these poor are mine, and what you refused to do unto them you refused to do unto me". There is the scene described by our Saviour.— *Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by Satisfaction, and how is it divided?
2. Is intended Satisfaction essential to the Sacrament of Penance?
3. Is actual Satisfaction an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance?
4. Does voluntary Satisfaction constitute a part of the Sacrament of Penance?
5. What should be the nature of sacramental Satisfaction?
6. What do you mean by prayer as a penance imposed for sin?
7. What is meant by fasting imposed as penance for sin?
8. What do you mean by the satisfaction of alms-deeds?
9. Why does the Confessor impose penance on the penitent?
12. Will the penance given in Confession be sufficient to satisfy for sin?
11. Should penance be in proportion to our guilt?
12. What was the nature of the canonical penances?
13. By what means can we supply what is wanting of the penance imposed for sin?
14. In what other way can we make satisfaction to God for sin?

PRACTICE.

1. Receive with submission the penance imposed on you, and resolve to fulfil it punctually.

2. Offer to God all your labours and trials, in satisfaction for your sins.

3. Fervently pray to God to enable you to suffer with patience sickness and every other bodily pain, that you may satisfy for your sins.

PRAYER.

O my God! how often have I deserved the torments of Hell for my many and grievous sins! My crimes have been so enormous, that a whole life of the severest penance would be too small to make satisfaction to Thy offended justice for them. But how good, O Lord! art Thou, to be content with the slight works of penance imposed by my confessor, which I perform. From this day forward, I shall endure, in a spirit of resignation, all the trials and sufferings which Thou mayest be pleased to send me, and shall offer them all up to Thee in satisfaction for the many sins and offences I have committed against Thy loving goodness. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON INDULGENCES.

Q. What does the Church teach concerning Indulgences?

A. That Christ gave power to the Church to grant Indulgences, and that they are most useful to Christian people—*Council of Trent*, sess. 25.

1. An Indulgence is a remission of the whole or part of the temporal punishment which remains due to the Divine justice for sin, after the sin itself is forgiven and the eternal punishment due to it remitted by the Sacrament of Penance. "That Christ gave power to the Church" to grant Indulgences, is

what that Church and our holy faith teach us; and that such Indulgences “are most useful to Christian people”, the Fathers of the Council of Trent tell us. As the power of granting Indulgences has been given by Jesus Christ to His Church, and as she has exercised this Divine power from the very beginning, the Holy Council teaches and decides, that this ancient practice should be considered as “most useful to Christian people”, and pronounces an anathema on those who assert that Indulgences are of no use, or that the Church has no power to grant them.—*Conc. Trid. sess. 25.**

Q. What is the use of an Indulgence?

A. It releases from the canonical penances enjoined by the Church on penitents for certain sins.

2. In the early ages of the Church, public penances—of many years’ duration in some cases—were imposed on penitent sinners. They were obliged to pray much, to pass their days in mourning, and their nights in watching and tears, to lie upon the ground, to fast, to give alms, and to exercise themselves in other works of charity and religion. For example, a person who had fallen away from his religion, was to do penance for the space of ten years—any one that had sworn by the name of Heaven, by God’s holy name, or by any of His Saints or holy things, was to fast fifteen days on bread and water—whosoever had been guilty of laughing or talking in the Church during the time of Divine service, his penance was to fast for ten days on bread and water—any one that had cursed his parents, was to undergo the like penance for forty days. For one sin of fornication, was enjoined three years’ penance; for that of adul-

tery, five, or sometimes seven years' penance, and so proportionately to other sins. During all that time, they were not allowed to receive Holy Communion, and were required to stand, clothed in sack-cloth, on Sundays and Holidays at the Church-door, and there to beg the prayers of the faithful.

3. These public penances are called "Canonical penances", because they were prescribed by the canons of the Church. The "Canonical penances", imposed on penitents, were, however, remitted whenever the martyrs, who were about to lay down their lives for the Faith, called for their release. Tertullian and St. Cyprian tell us so. When the Canonical penances were afterwards discontinued in the Church, Indulgences became more common, and were substituted in their place; and so their use and efficacy were "to release from the Canonical penances, enjoined by the Church on penitents for certain sins".†

Q. Has an Indulgence any other effect?

A. It also remits the temporary punishment with which God often visits our sins, and which must be suffered in this life or in the next, unless cancelled by Indulgences, or by acts of Penance and other good works.

4. It is the doctrine of the Church that an Indulgence, when truly gained, is not barely "a release from the Canonical penances enjoined by the Church on penitents for certain sins", but has another effect, and that is, an actual remission, by God Himself, of the whole or part of "the temporary punishments with which God often visits our sins", and which are due to them after the eternal guilt is remitted. "This temporary punishment" due to our sins must be suffered,

for the justice of God requires it; for though the guilt of sin, and the eternal punishment due to it be remitted, yet, ordinarily speaking, there still remains some temporal punishment due to it, "which must be suffered in this life or in the next". If all punishment were remitted along with the guilt of sin, man would be inclined to look on sin as a trifling evil, and consequently would commit it with less fear. To God's offended justice we must pay the debt of this "temporary punishment", unless it be "cancelled by indulgences, or by acts of penance or other good works".

Q. Is it certain that when God forgives sin, as to its guilt and eternal punishment, He requires a temporary punishment to be suffered for it?

A. Yes; God does require temporary punishment to be suffered for sin, though its guilt and eternal punishment be forgiven.

5. Although by means of the Sacrament of Penance sin has been forgiven by God, and the eternal punishment due to it remitted, yet His justice requires that we should suffer for it a "temporary punishment". This we can prove from the Holy Scriptures, for in that Sacred Volume we find that God often required "temporary punishments" to be suffered by those whose sins He had forgiven. We read in the Book of Genesis that when God pardoned Adam his sin of disobedience, it was on condition that he should do penance for it by the labour to which his Maker condemned him: "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life"—*Gen.*, iii. 17. And indeed a very severe penance it was; for, in consequence of his sin, he was turned out of the earthly Paradise, and condemned to labour during life, and, with his

posterity, became subject to death, and to a long train of miseries and calamities in consequence of his disobedience.

6. In the Second Book of Kings we read, that when God pardoned David his sins of adultery and murder, He told him, by His prophet Nathan, that he should be chastised by the death of his son. "The Lord hath also taken away thy sin; thou shalt not die", says the Prophet, and he immediately adds: "Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die"—II. *Kings*, xii. 14. Here we see a most severe sentence of temporal punishment passed upon David, which was executed upon him with the utmost rigour, even though the guilt of his sin was forgiven; for soon after, the child that was born to him died; one of his sons abused his own sister; that son was murdered by a brother; this brother afterwards rose up in rebellion against his father, forced him to fly to the wilderness for his safety, and then, taking his father's wives, abused them before the whole people. Here we plainly see the forgiveness of the sin separated from the remission of the punishment, and the justice of God reserving a right to inflict a "temporal punishment" on those who have transgressed His sacred laws.

7. For this reason, the penitents mentioned in the Old Testament, when they begged of God pardon of their sins, never asked to be exempt from all punishment, but only not to be chastised according to the rigour of Divine justice. They desired to escape God's indignation and the more signal effects of His wrath; yet they submitted willingly to His fatherly correction, and to the punishment He should impose upon them. "Rebuke me not, O Lord", said David, "in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath".

A little after he declares that he is ready to do penance, and to suffer for his sins. "I am ready", says he, "for scourges"—*Psalms*, xxx. 7. The Prophet Jeremias, in like manner, begs of God that He will chastise him, but not in His fury.

8. These and many like examples show evidently that God does not pardon sin but on condition of doing penance; and that the penitents of that time never pretended nor required to be exempted from suffering the penalties of their sins. Yea, even some of the most enlightened among them, having sounded the depths of the punishment, the infliction of which God has reserved to himself in the other life, discovered that God punished after death even the sins of the just, which had not been sufficiently expiated during life. Judas Machabeus, not only a great captain, but also a high-priest of the Law, after a signal victory, sent orders to Jerusalem to have Sacrifice offered for the sins of the faithful, who had been slain in battle. The Scripture approves of that action, as "an holy and wholesome thought", assuring us that by prayers and sacrifices the dead are loosed from their sins. But this cannot be understood of sin, as to its guilt or the eternal punishment due to it, which cannot be remitted after death, no more than the sin itself.

9. In the New Law, God has still required the same satisfaction with regard to receiving Christians into His favour, by obliging them to some temporal punishment; and that with so much the more reason, as the Law they profess, being more holy and more perfect, ought to punish rigorously sins committed against it. For this reason, our Saviour says that in the day of judgment we must render an account of every idle word—*Matt.*, xii. 36. This account shall be rendered after death, when we shall have to give an account of our sins, and to receive the punishment thereof. But this shall not be an eternal punish

ment, for "every idle word" will not deserve it; it must then be a "temporary punishment" which must be undergone, and by which we must satisfy for our sins in the other life, if we have not satisfied for them in this.

10. The holy Council of Trent assigns two reasons why God obliges the penitent sinner to suffer "temporary punishment", although the sin has been forgiven. The first reason is, that the strict equity of Divine justice requires that those who are not equally guilty, should not be treated in the same manner; as, for example, that those who have sinned before Baptism, should be treated differently from those who sinned after Baptism. As the former have sinned with more ignorance, and without having received so many graces as Christians have, God forgives, by Baptism, not only all their sins, but also all the punishment which He might justly exact in satisfaction for them—granting them an entire pardon of all that is passed, in favour of their first admission to the Christian religion. But He treats otherwise those who relapse into sin after Baptism, as their transgressions are infinitely greater—having a clearer knowledge of sin—and as their offences are more grievous—having been delivered from the slavery of sin and the Devil, and having received the grace of the Holy Ghost, by which their souls became the dwelling place of God. These reasons, which so much aggravate the sins of Christians, are also the cause why God is not so indulgent in pardoning them, but obliges penitents to make some satisfaction.

11. "Certainly", says the Council of Trent, "the equity of divine justice requires that He should deal otherwise with those who, before Baptism, have sinned through ignorance, than with those who, having been once delivered from the servitude of sin and the

devil, and after having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, have not been afraid to violate the temple of God, and contristate His Holy Spirit"—*sess. xiv. c. 8.* From thence the Council descends to the second reason, drawn from the goodness of God, which enjoins these punishments for our advantage. "It is very agreeable to the Divine bounty not to remit our sins, without obliging us to some satisfaction, lest by occasion of too much mildness, we should think our sins less than they are, and from thence take occasion to fall into greater, and to become offensive and contumelious to the Holy Ghost, and draw upon ourselves the divine wrath in the day of wrath. For, without doubt, these satisfactory punishments have a wonderful virtue to divert penitents from sin, and serve as a bridle to restrain them, and teach them to keep a stricter watch over themselves for the future. Besides, they cure those remains and disorders which sin had left in the soul, and root out, by the contrary virtuous acts, the vicious habits contracted by a disorderly way of living"—*sess. xiv. c. 8.*

12. St. Gregory the Great says, that David merited, by the humble confession of his sins, to hear from the Prophet's mouth that God had pardoned him his sins; yet, he was obliged, afterwards, to undergo several temporal punishments for these very sins. This holy Pope concludes with these remarkable words: "That God never forgives any sin without inflicting some punishment for it". St. Augustin says: "You show mercy, O Lord, to him who confesses his sins; but on this condition alone, that he will punish himself; and thus justice and mercy will be both satisfied—mercy, because sin is pardoned; and justice, because sin is punished". A man, when he sins, indulges himself in some criminal and forbidden pleasure. Now, as contraries are cured by contraries only, it follows, that such a

man, to repair the injury he has hereby done to God and to himself, should forego afterwards innocent pleasures, on account of having indulged himself in guilty ones ; and it follows, that he should submit to some temporal punishment, in order to avoid those that are eternal, and that he should submit to the rigours of penance for having gratified his inordinate inclinations to pleasure. It was this consideration that made Tertullian and St. Pacian both declare, that a Christian who had at any time sinned, should never forget doing penance for his sins, in order to appease the wrath of God and to satisfy His justice.

Q. Has the Church power to grant such Indulgences ?

A. Yes. "Whatsoever", says Christ to St. Peter, "thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be also loosed in heaven"—*Matt.*, xvi. 19.

13. The Church has "power to grant such Indulgences", for that power was granted to the Apostles and their successors by Jesus Christ, as evidently appears from Holy Scripture. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ says to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, etc., and I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven"—*Matt.*, xvi. 19. In which words our Saviour gives to St. Peter, as the chief pastor of His Church—whose authority as such extends to all her members—an ample and universal power of conducting the faithful to Heaven by loosing them from everything that might be a hindrance to them from going thither, provided always they be properly disposed, and perform the necessary con-

ditions required. Now, there are only two things that can hinder a soul from going to Heaven, which are, the guilt of sin and the debt of temporal punishment; for till that debt be paid, none can enter there. Consequently, our Saviour's words, "whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven", manifestly include both, and assure us, when the chief Pastor looses the faithful from their sins in the Sacrament of Penance, or from the debt of temporal punishment by granting an Indulgence, this sentence is ratified in Heaven, and stands good in the sight of God Himself.

14. On another occasion, Christ declares "that he that will not hear the Church"—that is, the pastors and governors of the Church—is to be considered "as a heathen and a publican", and He immediately says to these Pastors, in the persons of all the Apostles, "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven"—*Matt.*, xviii. 18. In which words, by the same reasoning as in the former case, we see that the power of granting Indulgences has been conferred on the first Pastors or Bishops of the Church as successors of the Apostles. This power is given to the Head of the Church with regard to all the faithful, and to the Bishops of the Church with regard to that portion of the faithful committed to their charge—to be exercised by them according to such regulations as the Church herself, in her sacred Councils, judges proper to make.†

15. Again, St. Paul, though not one of the twelve Apostles then present with our Saviour when this power was given them, exercised it himself at the request of the faithful of Corinth, towards the incestuous Corinthian, whom he had previously excommunicated and put under penance. For when he was

informed that this man had given evident proofs of his real contrition and sincere conversion, the Apostle treated him with the greatest indulgence, and not only removed the excommunication he had inflicted, but also removed all guilt, and remitted to him, both before God and man, the remainder of the punishment which he was to have suffered. This *pardon* St. Paul granted *in the person of Christ*, that is, by the power and authority he had received from Christ, as if Christ Himself, really present, had granted it; "For what I forgive, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ"—II. *Cor.*, xi. 6, 10.

16. Tertullian, who flourished in the second century, testifies, that the Bishops and Pastors of the primitive Church were accustomed, in the days of persecution, to grant Indulgences to repenting sinners, and to remit the penalties due to their crimes, when they produced letters of attestation from imprisoned and tortured martyrs, who sealed their faith with the effusion of their blood. We read in the twelfth chapter of the first General Council of Nice, and in other particular Councils, that Bishops were empowered to abridge the time and the degrees of the Canonical penances then in force, in favour of such penitents as performed them with fervour. Whenever they were moved by the tears and repentance of sinners to do this, it was called an "Indulgence" of as many years as the penance enjoined by the Canons for their different sins should otherwise have lasted, because it was the effect of an indulgence of the compassion of the Church towards her children. The Church, firmly persuaded that she had the power of "granting indulgences", made use of it on every necessary occasion, from the very cradle of Christianity, down through every age, to the present time. and considered them, in the words of the Coun-

cil of Trent, "useful and salutary". Still this power, like that of absolution, is not arbitrary; there must be a just cause for the exercise of it, such as the greater good of the penitent, or of the faithful, or of Christendom in general, and there must be also a certain proportion between the punishment remitted and the good work performed. Hence, no one can be ever sure that he has gained the entire benefit of an Indulgence, though he has performed all the conditions appointed for gaining it.

Q. How many kinds of Indulgence are there?

A. There are two kinds of Indulgence, which are called plenary Indulgence and partial Indulgence.

17. A plenary indulgence is that which remits all the temporal punishment due to sin; a partial indulgence is that which remits only a part of the temporal punishment due to sin. Partial indulgences are usually determined and reckoned by years and days. The Canonical penances in former times were imposed for years and days, and not for months or weeks. When Canonical penances began to be gradually disused in the Church, Indulgences became then more common, and were substituted in the place of these penances. The Indulgences were reckoned by years and days, in the same manner that the Canonical penances were imposed and reckoned. It was likewise a custom, in former times, to impose a fast on bread and water for forty days, for certain sins; this was called a *quarantine* or forty days' penance. In partial Indulgences, mention is made of these quarantines. The meaning of such an Indulgence is, that so many quarantines or forty days penance is remitted by the Indulgence to a person, which, otherwise, he would be obliged to perform by the Canonical penances. Likewise, when an Indul-

gence is granted for an hundred days, this means, that a person obtaining an Indulgence of an hundred days, obtains a remission of as much temporal punishment as he would have obtained by performing a Canonical penance of an hundred days, which was formerly imposed for certain sins.

18. Indulgences are also divided into perpetual indulgences, and into indulgences for a limited time, and into local, real, and personal. Perpetual Indulgences are those that are granted without any restriction or limitation of time. Temporary Indulgences are Indulgences granted for a limited time. Local Indulgences are those that are determined and limited to a certain particular place, as a parochial Church, for instance. Real Indulgences are Indulgences annexed to any material objects, such as beads, medals. Personal Indulgences are Indulgences directly granted to a person, without any determination to any thing or place.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

THE INDULGENCE OF THE PORTIUNCULA

* The retired little chapel of the Portiuncula was the favourite place in which St. Francis spent much time at his devotion, and its dedication was celebrated by him with great solemnity. An account of its institution and origin is related to us by the Bollandists. St. Francis, prostrate one night in his cell, was shedding tears and praying for the conversion of sinners, with whose sad and deplorable condition he was deeply moved, when, on a sudden, an Angel appeared to him, and commanded him to repair immediately

to the little chapel of the Portiuncula. When the Saint arrived there he had a miraculous apparition. He beheld our Lord, attended by His holy mother, and surrounded by an innumerable troop of Angels. Our Lord addressed him in these words: "Francis, you and your brothers have shown an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls: ask Me what favour you please, and I will grant it". The holy man asked the Lord to grant a plenary Indulgence to all who visited the little chapel. Then Christ bade him go to the Pope, who would give a plenary Indulgence to all sincere penitents who visited it. This vision happened in 1221, and the Saint repaired to Honorius III., who was then at Perugia, and granted the Indulgence at that time verbally. Two years after, at the Saint's repeated request, his Holiness commissioned seven Bishops to go and publish this Indulgence at the Portiuncula, which they accordingly did. Seven authentic certificates of these Bishops, and of certain companions of St. Francis, which are extant, are original proofs of this Indulgence, and of the Saint's declaration of the afore-said revelation. It is, moreover, mentioned that the Saint had been assured by a revelation that Christ Himself ratified the grant of this Indulgence. The original Indulgence obtained by St. Francis was confined to the day itself, 2nd of August, and to the chapel of the Portiuncula. Pope Innocent XII., in 1695, granted a plenary Indulgence to all who, with due conditions, should visit the Church in which this chapel stands, on any day in the whole year. The Indulgence of the Portiuncula, on the 2nd of August, has been extended to all the Churches and chapels of the whole order, by the grants of Alexander IV., Martin IV., Clement V., Paul III., and Urban VII. The Portiuncula is a very famous place for devout pilgrimages; the number of those who resort to it on the feast of its dedication, on the 2nd of August, is said to be not much under twenty thousand. The old chapel of the Portiuncula, like the holy chapel of Loretto, is enclosed in the middle of a spacious Church, annexed to a large convent in the hands of Recollects, or Reformed Franciscans. It is the head, or the mother-house of this branch of the order.

FABIOLA DOING PUBLIC PENANCE.

† Holy Fabiola, descended from the illustrious family of Fabius, was married to one whose life was so immoral that

she was forced to leave him. She was then young, and as the laws of the empire permitted divorce, she, during the life of her husband, married another. After the death of her second husband, she entered into herself, and, acknowledging that her second marriage had been contrary to the gospel of Christ, she went through a course of public penance. On the vigil of the Pasch, she presented herself at the porch of the basilica of St. John Lateran with other penitents, her hair dishevelled, and her person presenting all the other marks of a public penitent. The appearance she presented drew forth tears from the entire assembly, not even excepting the Priests, and the Bishop himself. She remained outside the church until the Bishop, who had excluded her from it, recalled her. She then sold all her property, and was the first founder of the hospital of the sick in Rome, in which she tended the poor patients with her own hands. She afterwards bestowed many gifts on the clergy, religious, and pious virgins, not only in Rome, but throughout Tuscany.

POPE LEO AND INDULGENCES.

‡ When the twelfth and last session of the General Council of Lateran had concluded its sittings, Pope Leo turned his mind to the execution of a work, the most worthy of a Sovereign Pontiff's attention. The lapse of twelve centuries had materially impaired the basilica of St. Peter, which Constantine the Great first erected on the Vatican Hill. The old fabric was found to be in so decayed a state, that it was judged expedient to build a new one. A plan for that effect drawn by Bramante, upon a scale much more bold and novel than the former, was laid before the celebrated Michael Angelo, from whom it received some alterations and improvements. The boldness of the design suited the lofty genius of Leo, and animated his exertions to complete the work, which Julius, his predecessor, had begun. The sums in his treasury not being equal to the expenses, he was advised to solicit the pious generosity of the faithful at large. It was an eleemosynary aid which his Holiness asked for the House of God. By a similar aid, Moses had been enabled to erect and finish the tabernacle in the sumptuous manner that God had directed. For the encouragement of those who were inclined to contribute towards a work solely destined for divine worship, Leo opened the spiritual treasures of the Church, and annexed the gratuitous grant of an indulgence to their reli-

gibus contributions. Leo, at the same time, held out a grant of other indulgences to those who should engage in a crusade against the Turks. For the publication of these indulgences granted by Leo, preachers were nominated in every State of Europe, to explain their nature and spiritual effect, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. In Germany, the nomination was given to Albert, the Archbishop of Mentz and Magdeburg. On similar occasions, when a crusade was set on foot, the Augustinian friars had been usually appointed to announce it from the pulpit. For this once they were disappointed, and had the mortification to see the Dominicans preferred before them. Warm with resentment, or with zeal for the honour of their body, the most popular preachers amongst them mounted the pulpit, and exerted all the oratory they were masters of to do away with the disgrace which they fancied to have been thrown upon them. Of those, the most conspicuous was Martin Luther, then in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twelfth of his religious profession. Equally rough and fiery in his temper, he broke through all bounds of decency in his invectives. The university of Wittenberg, and Frederic, Elector of Saxony, openly espoused his interest. Emboldened by this support, he began to inveigh, not against the occasional abuses only which the Dominican preachers were accused of having committed, but against the very nature of indulgences, and the power of granting them.—*Reeve.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is an Indulgence, and does the Church teach that she has power to grant them?
2. What was the nature of the public penances imposed on penitents in the early ages of the Church?
3. By what means were penitents released from these Canonical penances?
4. Does an Indulgence remit the temporary punishment due to sin?
5. How do you prove that a temporary punishment is due to sin, after the guilt of it has been forgiven?

6. Did David suffer a temporal punishment for his sin after the guilt had been remitted?

7. Did the penitents of the Old Law, when they begged pardon of their sins, ask to be free from all punishment?

8. What do the examples of the penitents of the Old Testament prove?

9. Can you prove from the New Testament that God required a temporary punishment to be suffered for sin?

10. What reasons are assigned by the Council of Trent why a temporary punishment should be suffered for sin?

11. What are the words of the Council of Trent in reference to temporary punishment for sin?

12. What are the words of St. Gregory and St. Augustin as to temporary punishment to be suffered for sin?

13. How do you prove that the Church has power to grant Indulgences?

14. What says our Lord in the seventeenth chapter of St. Matthew?

15. Can you prove from St. Paul that the Church has power to grant Indulgences?

16. What are the words of Tertullian and the Council of Nice on Indulgences?

17. What do you mean by plenary and partial Indulgences?

18. What do you mean by Indulgences perpetual, limited, local, real, and personal?

PRACTICE.

1. Know exactly what an Indulgence means, that you may be able to confute those who misrepresent its meaning.

2. Think not, then, that an Indulgence exempts you from doing penance for your sins.

3. Thank Jesus Christ for His goodness in giving the Church the power of granting Indulgences.

PRAYER.

O my God! we shall for ever sing forth Thy mercies. Thy mercies towards us are without limit. Thou not only grantest pardon of our sins, and bringest forth our souls from the jaws of hell, but Thou also forgivest, through the power given by Thee to the Church, the temporal punishment due

to our sins. We shall never, dear Lord, cease thanking Thee for this additional mark of Thy love and goodness: and we now promise to serve Thee with fidelity during the remaining part of our lives. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON THE NATURE OF INDULGENCES.

Q. To whom does the Church grant Indulgences?

A. To such only as are in the state of grace, and are sincerely desirous to amend their lives, and to satisfy God's justice by penitential works.

1. The Church grants Indulgences "to such only as are in the state of grace, and are sincerely desirous to amend their lives". To gain an Indulgence it is necessary that a person should be in the state of grace, and in friendship with God; for, while one continues in the state of sin, and at enmity with God, and of course deserving of eternal punishment in the sight of the Divine justice, he is not in a state capable of receiving an Indulgence. And on this account it is, that in all grants of plenary Indulgences, it is generally required as a condition for gaining them, that we should first receive the sacrament of Penance, in order to regain the state of grace, without which we are incapable of receiving the benefit of an Indulgence. In the second place, we must be "sincerely desirous to amend our lives"; for without this sincere desire of amending one's life, sin will not be forgiven by God, and consequently no Indul-

gence can be granted by the Church; for the guilt of sin must first be remitted before an Indulgence can be gained.

2. We must also be sincerely desirous to satisfy God's justice by penitential works, in order to gain an Indulgence; for without this sincere desire, neither the eternal punishment due to sin, nor the temporal punishment, can be remitted. We have already seen, dear children, that to obtain pardon of mortal sin, and be reconciled with God, we must not only detest sin, and resolve on an amendment of our lives, but there is also required that we should have a "sincere desire to satisfy God's justice by penitential works", such as prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, and other works of that kind. Without this sincere desire, there can be no remission of sin; and as there can be no remission of sin, there can be no Indulgence gained.

'Q. Is an Indulgence a pardon for sins to come, or a license to commit sin?

A. No; nor can it remit past sins—for sin must be remitted by penance, as to the guilt of it and as to the eternal punishment due to mortal sin, before an Indulgence can be gained.

3. An Indulgence is not a "pardon for sins to come, nor a license to commit sin", nor do Catholics understand it to be such. Protestants grossly misrepresent the nature of Indulgences. Some of their writers—from ignorance, we hope, rather than from any intention to deceive—boldly assert that a Papal Indulgence is "a pardon for sins to come, or a license to commit sin". The assertion has no foundation in truth. No Roman Catholic who knows his religion believes the Pope to be invested with any

such power. Through ignorance or malice, superficial writers often advance the most absurd doctrines, either of their own fabrication, or borrowed from the stores of some interested dealer in religious calumny, and pass them off for genuine articles of Catholic belief.

4. Amongst the numerous writers of this stamp, we cannot but notice the romancing Mr. Guthrie, the author of the "Universal Gazetteer". This writer, in his account of Italy, has asserted a ridiculous list of fancied Indulgences, taken, as he pretends, from a book printed by the Pope's authority, under the title of "Rome, a great Custom-house for Sin". He endeavours to persuade his readers that in Rome every sin has its fixed price, and that by the payment of a certain sum the most heinous crimes are pardoned. With the same disregard of charity and truth, an eminent writer, Benson, speaks of the matter thus: "The Papists have taken a notable course to secure men from the fears of Hell—that of penances and Indulgences. To those who will pay the price, absolutions are to be had for the most abominable and not-to-be-named villainies, and license also for not a few wickednesses".*

5. In treating of this subject—a subject so much confused and perplexed by the misrepresentations of the enemies of our Faith—it will be necessary to give a clear and fixed notion of the matter. An Indulgence, as understood by Catholics, is not "a pardon for sins to come, nor a license to commit sin" of any kind, as Protestant writers charge them with believing. The first principles of natural religion must convince every rational being that God Himself, not to say the Pope, cannot give "a license to commit sin". The idea of such a license is incon-

* On the Man of Sin.

sistent with His sanctity, and, of course, with His very being. No Catholic ever believed it to be "a pardon for sins to come", as Mrs. Hannah More, and a great many other Protestant writers, represent the matter; for every Catholic knows that Christ Himself could not pardon sin before it was committed, because this would imply that He forgave the sinner without repentance.*

6. An Indulgence, in the Catholic sense of the word, is not, and does not include the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, past, present, or to come, or the eternal punishment due to it, as Protestants assert. It is neither "a pardon for sins to come, nor a license to commit sin" of any description. "Nor can it remit past sins"; for all Catholics believe and know that no mortal sin can be remitted by any other means except that of penance, "as to the guilt of it, and as to the eternal punishment due to it". They believe and know, that the essential guilt and eternal punishment of mortal sin can only be expiated by the precious merits of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, applied to our souls in the Sacraments, and that until sin be remitted by penance, no Indulgence can be gained, as an Indulgence necessarily supposes the forgiveness of the sin, as to its guilt and eternal punishment.†

7. They, too, know and believe that as a sovereign Prince, in showing mercy to one convicted of a capital offence, may either grant him remission of all punishment, or may leave him subject to some lighter punishment than that to which he was sentenced, so, too, they know that Almighty God may act in either of these ways with respect to sinners—that is, remitting the essential guilt of mortal sin and the eternal punishment due to it, and yet leaving a temporary punishment to be endured by the penitent sinner; and that by the power granted by Christ to

His Church, this *temporary punishment* can be remitted or relaxed by means of an Indulgence. This is the doctrine of the Church, and no Catholic professes or believes any other.

Q. To gain the full effect of a plenary Indulgence, must you detest and have sorrow for venial sins?

A. Yes; we must be sorry for even the least venial sin.

8. In order to gain the full effect of a plenary Indulgence, it is necessary to have true sorrow for, and a sincere detestation of, all our sins, even the least venial sin; because, as the punishment of sin will never be forgiven while the guilt of it remains in the soul, and as a sincere repentance is absolutely required for the remission of the guilt, therefore this sincere repentance must precede the remission of the punishment. Hence we may infer how few there are who gain the full effect of a plenary Indulgence, as there are few who have a sincere and efficacious sorrow for every venial sin, and a sincere and firm resolution of avoiding every sin, great or small, with all the occasions of it. Yet this consideration ought not to hinder us from using our best endeavours for gaining a plenary Indulgence when occasion offers; because, though we should not gain the whole effect of it, the more endeavours we use, and the better we are disposed, the more ample benefit we will reap from it. And the more we endeavour by works worthy of penance to satisfy the Divine justice, the better we will be disposed, when the opportunity presents itself, for gaining the more abundant effects of Indulgences; for, when we have done our best, it is perhaps little to what we ought to have done; and what we gain by Indulgences makes up for the deficiencies of human infirmity, but can never be supposed to patronize negligence and sloth.

Q. Why does the Church grant Indulgences?

A. To assist our weakness and to supply our insufficiency in satisfying the Divine justice for our transgressions.

9. We have been already told, dear children, that in the early ages of the Church penitents were obliged to undergo very severe penances; that for some sins seven years' public penance was enjoined; for others, eleven, fifteen, or more years, in proportion to the enormity of their crimes. During this time, the penitents fasted four *quarentines* in the year, at least, three days a-week, on bread and water. They stood at the Church gate upon Sundays and Holidays, clothed in the garb of penance, and were not admitted, unless for just and pressing reasons to the Sacraments, until their many years of penance were completed. Such was the practice and discipline of the Church for many ages. The spirit of penance was everywhere visible, from the great desire of emulating Jesus Christ—the perfect model of all Christians. The faithful, wishing to tread in the footsteps of their crucified Redeemer, spent their lives in the practice of the most painful austerities, and in the severest exercises of penance and mortification. They endeavoured, in general, with the aid of Divine grace, to satisfy for their sins, without having recourse to Indulgences.

10. When this primitive zeal became cold, and the spirit of penance relaxed, the Church judged it expedient to moderate the severity of her ancient discipline in condescension to the weaknesses of her children. On that account, the Church grants Indulgences, in these our days, more frequently than she did in the early ages; not that she thinks sin less offensiveto God now than then, but because she

"wishes to assist our weakness, and to supply our insufficiency in satisfying the Divine justice for our transgressions". The intention of the Church in granting Indulgences is not in any way to lessen the zeal of her children, or to exempt them from doing penance for their sins; but, on the contrary, her intention is to fill their hearts with the spirit of penance, and to inflame them with a more ardent desire of atoning for their sins by voluntary satisfactions, and by devoutly performing penitential works, which are usually enjoined and prescribed as a condition necessary for gaining an Indulgence. Hence, the Council of Trent teaches, that the obligation of doing penance is so indispensable a duty, that "the whole life of a Christian ought to be a continual practice of it".

Q. When the Church grants Indulgences, what does it offer to God to supply our weakness and insufficiency, and in satisfaction of our sins?

A. The merits of Christ, which are infinite and superabundant, together with the virtues and good works of His Virgin Mother and of all His saints.

11. When the Church grants Indulgences "to supply our weakness and insufficiency, and in satisfaction for our sins", she offers to God, as a compensation to His justice, "the merits of Christ, which are infinite and superabundant". To understand this, it is necessary to remark, that the merits of Christ are of infinite value and superabundant; that in His blood we have a most plentiful redemption, and an inexhaustible and "superabundant" treasure; and that "these merits of Christ, which are infinite and superabundant", God Almighty has given to His

Church, to be applied and dispensed to us, her children, for the good of our souls, to make up our deficiencies, supply our wants, and relieve our necessities. "The merits of Christ, which are infinite and superabundant", are dispensed to the faithful, and applied to our souls by the Pastors of His Church, when they administer to us the Holy Sacraments. They are also offered to God as a compensation to His Divine justice for the debt of *temporal punishment* due to our sins, when a remission or relaxation of that debt is granted to us by means of an Indulgence.

12. "The virtues and good works of His Virgin Mother and of all the saints", together with the infinite and superabundant merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, are, too, offered to God by the Church, "to supply our weakness and insufficiency, and in satisfaction for our sins". And how these virtues and good works of the Blessed Virgin and all the saints can avail in the sight of God in our favour, St. Thomas assigns good reasons: "There exists", says he, "an union between all the members of Christ's mystical body; there exists, also, a Communion of Saints. From both these causes it happens that the merits and sufferings of one or more members can be applied to other members of the same body; for the different members of the body never confine their services or utility to themselves alone, but unite to do all the service in their power to the other members of the same body, and to the body itself". Hence, by the virtual will of the Saints, who performed many good and satisfactory works, these satisfactions may be applied to the common good and utility of all the members of the Church; and, therefore, all the faithful, as members of one another, partake of one another's prayers and good works, especially when they are expressly intended and applied for one another.†

13. These “virtues and good works of the Mother of God and all the saints”, were, no doubt, abundantly rewarded by everlasting happiness; but these good works, considered as satisfactory, could still be applied to the utility of others; for, in every good work there is always included a double value, or a value of two kinds—a *meritorious* value and a *satisfactory* value. The *meritorious* value of a work is derived from the principle of grace and charity with which it is done. Considered in this light, it is rewarded, and consequently promotes and contributes to the happiness of him who performs the good work. The *satisfactory* value of a good work is derived from the labour, difficulty, and hardship suffered and undergone in doing the good work; and the performance of such a work, considered in this point, tends directly to repair an injury or outrage done to another. §

14. Seeing, then, that the prayers, penances, and good works of the faithful, and especially of the holy Saints of God—who are of all others the most in favour with Him—are, through the merits of Jesus Christ, on whom they all depend, most readily accepted by Almighty God for the benefit of all the members of His Church—especially when, in a spirit of charity, they are offered up and applied for that purpose—the Church, when she grants an Indulgence to her children for relieving the debt of temporal punishment due to the Divine justice, offers up, along with the infinite satisfaction of Christ, all the prayers, penances, “virtues, and good works of His Virgin Mother and of all His saints”, as a most acceptable oblation to the justice of God, in satisfaction or compensation for the Indulgence she grants. And this she does both in imitation of what God Himself did, when He joined *His own sake* and *David’s sake* as the joint method of protecting Jerusalem, and as

an exercise of that holy "Communion of Saints" which she professes in the Creed; so that out of their abundance our wants are supplied and our debt paid. (II. Cor. viii. 14.)

Q. Who are those who can grant Indulgences?

A. The Pope and the Bishops alone have the ordinary power of granting Indulgences.

15. The power of granting Indulgences is vested in all who preside over the Church in the public capacity of general rulers, and who have jurisdiction in an external forum—such as Popes, Archbishops, and Bishops. The Pope, as head of the whole Church, as authorised to grant Indulgences to the whole Church; but Archbishops and Bishops can grant Indulgences in their respective dioceses only. Bishops had, from the beginning of the Church, a power of granting a plenary Indulgence in their respective dioceses, and both enjoyed and used it till the fourth Council of Lateran. In this Council they were deprived of that power, and allowed to grant Indulgences but for forty days in all ordinary cases, and an hundred days' Indulgence on the consecration of a Church, and forty days on the anniversary day of such a consecration. Benedict XIV. considers as probable that Vicars-capitular have not the power of granting Indulgences, and the Sacred Congregation engages them to refrain from granting them—*Vicarius Capitularis abstineat*. Although the Pope has the power of granting Indulgences through the entire Church, yet it is a received principle that the *briefs* of Indulgences are not to be put into execution in a diocese until they have been inspected and recognised as authentic by the ordinary, that is, by the Bishop. This has been ruled by the Council of Trent, that abuses may be prevented.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

**THE CHURCH CANNOT TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE, NOR TOLERATE
UNHOLY PRACTICES.**

* There is no institution that has been so persecuted as the Catholic Church. Age after age has witnessed it. Now the military, now the royal, now the material, again the intellectual world, rise with rage and determination to destroy her. They have dashed themselves against her in succeeding waves of strong, and apparently irresistible, power, only to be dashed to pieces at the base of the tower of God—His holy Church. Oh, my friends, if arguments were wanted to prove the divinity of her origin, the immortality of her life, we have this one argument—that the world for eighteen centuries has done all that it could to destroy the Catholic Church, and failed. Behold her during the first three hundred years of her existence, while yet an infant in her cradle, just coming forth from the creative mind where she was immaculately conceived—during that three hundred years the whole weight of the Roman Empire was concentrated into one effort to destroy Christianity and Rome, and it failed. Rome, that conquered the whole earth—Rome, against whose terrible arm no power in the world was able to stand—Rome, whose word was universal law, tried, but tried in vain, to conquer the Church of Christ. It was the first, the greatest, and last defeat which shattered the power of that mighty Pagan Empire. Behold the Church of God when she emerged from her catacombs and caves of the earth, to walk in the eyes of men as a thing of light and beauty, to call all the nations seated in the shadow of death to rise and follow in the trail of her brightness. Instantly she is assailed by oriental heresies, which for many years lacerated her bosom. Not a single dogma of her faith was left untouched or uncontradicted. The learning of the Greek, now schismatic, is arrayed against the Church of God; the keen and discriminating mind of the Asiatic, the learning of Alexandria, are all enlisted on the side of heresy, now denying the Divinity of the Saviour, now denying the truth of His humanity, and again denying the necessity of grace; in a word, taking up every single dogma of the Catholic Church, and

bringing to bear for the destruction of that dogma all that the world had of intrigue, of intellect, of learning, and of material power; and the Church of God, flinging the ægis of her protection over every iota of her dogma, saved them all, came forth triumphant and victorious. Behold the great ecclesiastical revolution of the sixteenth century. It tore from the bosom of the Church whole nations—the mightiest empire of the world gone in the Greek schism, all the hardy nations of the North-West of Europe plunging into Protestantism and leaving the Church of God, or turning only to raise voice and hand against her. They have tried for three hundred years, and in that terrible contest that Christianity assumed outside the Church has been shattered into pieces—shattered into the utter infidelity of our age. In the midst of that universal intellectual ruin the Catholic Church rises untouched, glorious and triumphant, as if hand were never raised against her, as if the sword never struck on her shield. The Almighty God, when He founded the Catholic Church, instilled into her lips His own divine word, the word of God, the conception of the mind of God, the eternal truth as it lies in the infinite mind of God, and therefore in virtue of putting this word upon her, the Almighty God gathered her into the simplicity of His own being. The Catholic Church is simple in her unity, indivisible; there is no element of corruption in her, there is no element of decomposition in her. Now, the thing that is simple in its unity is immortal—cannot die, even in nature: the more any element is reduced to a simple essence, the more indestructible it becomes. The Catholic Church is based upon one idea, and only one, and it is the eternal truth and word of God—as that idea is inseparable from God, therefore the Catholic Church that represents that essential unity and inseparable idea, is indestructible because of its simplicity. She has not in her the elements of decay. Why do we die? Because we are made up of two elements of nature, the body and the soul. Separate these, and death ensues; but if there be no element of composition, consequently of separation or decomposition, that nature is immortal. Now, the Catholic Church has no such element of decomposition in her, because she is permeated and animated with the living and indivisible word of God, “Do you wish to destroy her?” I will say to the persecutors of the age: “There is one thing you must first do: you must mount to heaven, you must mount to the heaven of heavens, you must lay your hands upon the eternal God; you must tear and rend asunder the indivisible Divinity of God; you must separate the Word in nature, substance, and power,

from the Father who begat Him in all eternity—and it is only when you have shattered all those things that I have described that you can destroy the immortality of the Spouse of God".—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

LUTHER REVISITING ERFURT.

† On the eve of Palm Sunday, Luther, on his way to the Diet of Worms, alighted at the convent of the Augustinians, where, a few years before, he had taken the habit. It was nightfall; a little wooden cross over the tomb of a friar whom he had known, and who had lately departed to the Lord, struck his attention, and troubled his soul. He was himself no longer the poor monk, travelling on foot and begging his bread. His power equalled that of Charles V., and all men had their eyes on him. That morning, on his march, he had sung the famous war-hymn which Heyne calls the Marseillaise of the Reformation; and the Emperor was about to resist him, as he said in his imperial rescript, "though at the peril of his own blood, of his dignity, and of the fortune of the empire". The triumphant innovator was recalled to himself for an instant by seeing the tomb of a faithful brother. He pointed it out to his companion, Dr. Jonas: "See, there he rests; and I——" He could not finish. After a little while he returned to it, and sat down on the stone, where he remained more than an hour, till he was reminded that the convent-bell had tolled the hour for sleep. Well might the heart in which such tempests were gathering be oppressed with gloom at the sight of that peaceful grave!

THE MERITS, GRACES, AND VIRTUES OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

† "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son". There is the promise. There is Mary. As she shines in heaven so does she shine upon the inspired page of Scripture—"Morning Star", because she was to come as a harbinger and messenger, and as a certain assurance that He who conceived her and made her would come, after her appearance upon this earth, to visit this world in her, to come forth from her immaculate bosom, "a shining light unto the salvation of the Gentiles, and a glory unto the people of Israel". Therefore, in her coming in immaculate purity—as the morning star is the brightest of all the stars that shine at that hour in the heavens, because it is nearest

to the sun—as the morning star, as it rises over the eastern hills, appears with a pure, silvery light, no speck or stain upon its white face, no darkness amid the serene rays sent forth streaming from its silvery bosom—so Mary comes, and in her coming upon the earth she was surrounded by the grace of her immaculate Conception, and at once raised above all on this earth, above all in Heaven, above all created beings, in their approaches to perfect sanctity. Preferred before the angels; and why? Because there is not an Angel in Heaven that was not tempted; and Mary's immaculate Conception in Heaven removed the temptation from her. Preferred before all the daughters of earth; for no child of earth, from the day that Adam fell, was ever conceived but in sin. No shade or thought to sin allied ever crossed Mary, even in the first moment of her Conception. More than this, in that first immaculate Conception, the woman who was to be the Mother of God—the woman whose figure captivated the eye of God in His own eternal designs and councils from all eternity—the woman who was to be the glory of Heaven as well as the joy of the earth, in that one grace of her immaculate Conception—the woman of sanctity, the woman of grace, the woman in whom all the accumulated and united graces that God had ever bestowed upon His Angels in Heaven, or upon His Saints upon the earth; who was perfectly holy, came up to God's own standard of holiness, and consequently she was united to God by a perfect union, undivided by the slightest taint of sin, by the slightest necessity for a tear of repentance. The Eternal and all Holy God, who made her, was able to take her, at the moment of her immaculate Conception, and hold her in His arms of infinite love; and she was worthy of the embrace of the Most High.

I will not seek to raise up the veil that covers the mysteries of that life in Nazareth. Suffice it to say that, so dear was Mary to her Divine Son, that He lived with her for thirty years. He came to save the world. He came to do a certain work; He took thirty-three years to do that work, and only gave three years directly to it—the three last years of His life. He lingered for thirty years with Mary. Her love was the light of His human life; her smile was the sunbeam that lighted up His sorrowful path. Yea, when He went forth from Nazareth, as if reluctant to leave that bosom that He had dwelt upon so long—reluctant to turn His thoughts on other purposes—He did not go alone; but Mary went with Him, accompanied Him in His business; heard His word when He spoke; saw Him in the horrors of His

Passion; climbed that steep hill of Calvary, and stood beneath the Cross when He died, and took His head, crowned with thorns, and put it upon her bosom, and held His bleeding body in her arms, and followed Him to the tomb, through the glories of His Resurrection, and then, in that scene of the Ascension, saw Him last of all. She, whose glance was keener than all others, because intensified by her maternal love as well as her love for the perfect God, penetrated into the clouds, and saw into the brighter region beyond: while those who stood on Olivet had long lost sight of Him, Mary still beheld Him. Her keen eyes cleft the clouds, her affection followed Him even to the threshold of the golden gates. She was the last to lose sight of her Son upon the earth.

What was her subsequent life? Twelve years of hope deferred; twelve long years rolled away like twelve thousand years over Mary's widowed heart, as she was left derelict upon the earth. She counted every moment that passed in the ardent longing and sighing of her heart once more to be joined to her Son; she counted the hours as they rolled slowly away—she felt the agony of hope deferred, a burning desire to depart, until the twelve years were to her like the three hours of agony when her Son looked up to Heaven and cried: "Hast Thou forsaken me? hast Thou forgotten me, O Father in Heaven?" So Mary cried to God in her widowed exile. To leave the earth was the desire of her soul. She had lived in the happiness and sunshine of His presence for the thirty years of His blessed life; but now she looks in vain for the face of her God and of her child. Oh, how she must have envied the lot of the first martyrs! How her very soul went forth within her, on the wings of desire, to accompany the soul of Stephen, the first martyr, as it mounted to Heaven and laid hold on the crown which to Mary was denied. But at length she passed away.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE VIRTUES AND GOOD WORKS OF THE SAINTS.

§ When we contemplate that intelligence in the Saints—those pure affections and that powerful free will—we behold in the Saints men, who, in the midst of all the darkness of the world, guarding against the opinions and the strong vagaries of the human intellect, the contradictory evidence of this sense or that science of theirs; men who, from the first day of their sanctity, kept sight of God, with the close full vision of divine faith: caught sight of God with an intellect irradiated by the purest rays of divine knowledge, and became by that knowledge not only the servants but the inti-

mate friends of Almighty God: men who lived upon this earth, not of the earth, but with the light of God beaming about their souls. When we contemplate the beauty of the Saints of God, we find them men who, in spite of all the allurements of the senses, in spite of all the temptations of the flesh, were overpowered—overmastered by one enormous, mighty, absorbing love, and that love was for Christ, their Lord and their God; a love so great that it lifted them up above all mere affections of the world; a love so absorbing that it left no room in their hearts for any earthly affection; a love so strong and so powerful that it enabled them to trample upon the material nature, and to join their hearts with the immaculate heart of Christ, so as to make His love the absorbing passion of their lives.

Finally, in contemplating the Saints, we behold the will, the powerful will, second only to the will of God. Oh! what a tremendous power of free-will do we behold in these Saints! No dangers overpowered them, no temptations overcame them, no enemies conquered them. Their way to their God—to His love and to His kingdom—lay through fire and flame and bloodshed. Their way lay through the thorny paths of martyrdom. Their way lay through solitary lives, spent in mortification and fasting, in the deserts. Their way lay through painful labours—faithfully and lovingly endeavouring, to the last moment, for the love of God. Did they ever flinch, these magnificent servants of God? Did they ever turn away from the mighty tortures or from almost indescribable torments? Did they ever turn aside from the trials or from the terrible persecutions that arose, like surging waves, around them? No, no. But, with the strength that came to them from God, they rushed through every obstacle, until, at last, they held the crown that was in the hands of Christ awaiting them.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. To gain an Indulgence, must we be in a state of grace, and have a sincere desire to amend our lives?
2. To gain an Indulgence, should we have a sincere desire to satisfy God's justice by penance?
3. What interpretations do Protestants give to Indulgences?

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5. Is it absurd to suppose that an Indulgence can forgive sin?
6. What do Catholics understand by an Indulgence?
7. In what way do Catholics illustrate what they mean by an Indulgence?
8. To gain fully a plenary Indulgence, must one have sorrow for venial sins?
9. What penances were imposed on the penitents of the early ages of the Church?
10. For what reason does the Church grant Indulgences?
11. In granting Indulgences, what does the Church offer to God in satisfaction for our sins?
12. How can the virtues and good works of the Saints be employed in our favour?
13. Is there a meritorious value and a satisfactory value in every good work?
14. How do you explain how the good works of the Saints can compensate for an Indulgence?
15. In whom is the power of granting Indulgences vested?

PRACTICE.

1. Always recollect that Indulgences can never be gained until sin shall have been remitted by penance.
2. Know that it is the merits of Christ and His Saints that are offered to God as a compensation for Indulgences.
3. Be firmly persuaded that the Pope and the Bishops of the Church can alone grant Indulgences.

PRAYER.

O my God! we have now been taught the great value of Indulgences, and how useful and salutary they are to all Christians. We can never sufficiently thank Thy loving goodness, in giving power to Thy Church to remit or relax the temporary punishment which Thy justice demands as a satisfaction for our sins. We shall, in return for this great favour, so order our lives that every action, word, and thought of ours may be directed to Thy honour and glory, and to the sanctification of our souls. We know, dear Lord, that the more fervently we serve Thee in this life, the more benefit we shall hereafter derive from the Indulgences granted us. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ON THE CONDITIONS OF AN INDULGENCE.

Q. What conditions are generally necessary to gain Indulgences ?

A. A good Confession and Communion, and a faithful compliance with the other good works which the Church requires on such occasions.

1. In order to gain an Indulgence, we should be in a state of grace, for, as we have seen in a previous question, the state of mortal sin is altogether inconsistent with the gaining of an indulgence. One of the first conditions, then, for gaining an indulgence, is "a good Confession", if one be in the state of mortal sin, as "a good Confession" is the ordinary means appointed by God to regain His grace. Should even a person be in the state of grace, Confession is a necessary condition for gaining a plenary indulgence, as all grants and decrees of indulgences, now-a-days, contain always a clause that an Indulgence can be only obtained by those who are truly contrite, and confess as they ought. "A good Confession" should, therefore, be considered as a work enjoined, and a condition necessary to be complied with, in order to obtain a plenary Indulgence. Hence, a person who is not conscious of a mortal sin, is, however, obliged to confess in order to obtain the Indulgence, according to a decree of the Congregation of Indulgences, dated 1759. But in this latter case it is not necessary to receive absolution, as has been decided by the same Congregation, by a decree,

dated 15th December, 1841, Cardinal Castracane being Prefect.*

2. Clement XIII., by a decree, dated 9th December, 1763, granted permission to all who are in the habit of confessing weekly—unless lawfully hindered—to gain, by that one weekly confession, the benefit of every Indulgence that may happen in that week, unless they fall unfortunately into mortal sin. The decree, however, excepts Indulgences granted as a jubilee, or *ad instar* jubilee, as Confession in these two cases is necessary to gain the Indulgence: *Nihil tamen innovanda circa indulgentiam jubilæi tam ordinarii, quam extra ordinarii aliasque ad instar jubilæi concessas.*

3. By a Decree of the Congregation of Indulgences, dated 12th June, 1822, and approved by Pope Pius VII., Confession made on any day of the seven preceding the Feast—the Indulgence granted on which, we propose to gain—is sufficient, and another Confession on the day of Indulgence, or on the day before, is not required to gain that Indulgence, provided we have not fallen into mortal sin, and that all the other necessary conditions be complied with. And not only is the Indulgence of a particular Feast gained by one who has confessed on the seventh or eighth day before the Feast, but by a recent decision of the same Congregation, given at Rome, on the 15th December, 1841, all the Indulgences are gained which occur within eight days, and for gaining which Confession is prescribed. In a great many dioceses, in virtue of rescripts obtained from the Holy See, the faithful, by confessing only twice in the month, can gain all the Indulgences occurring during the month, except they fall into mortal sin within that time.

4. The second condition necessary for gaining a plenary Indulgence—if we except the Indulgence of

the Stations of the Cross—is “a good communion”. The Indulgence of any particular festival can be gained by receiving Holy Communion on the Vigil of, or the day before, that Feast, according to a decree of the Sacred Congregation, dated 22nd June, 1822. In virtue of the same Confession and the same Communion, we can gain, on the one day, all the plenary Indulgences to which we are entitled as members of different religious Confraternities. If a plenary Indulgence occurs on the day in which we receive Easter Communion, it can be gained by us, as we can satisfy the Paschal precept, and obtain a plenary Indulgence on the same day, if the Indulgence be not granted in the form of a jubilee.

5. Together with “a good Confession and Communion”, there is also required, as a condition necessary to gain an indulgence, “a faithful compliance with the other good works, which the Church requires on such occasions”. For as Indulgences are always granted on certain conditions to be performed on our part, such as approaching the holy Sacraments, performing works of charity and mercy, exercises of piety and religion, prayers for the necessities of the Church, and the like—if these conditions be not exactly performed as required, we have no title to the benefit of the Indulgence. If one, through ignorance or even invincible forgetfulness, omit any part of the works or prayers imposed, that person gains no Indulgence at that time. Neither does a person gain an Indulgence by performing the prayers or good works which the Church prescribes for that purpose, if he be already obliged on other grounds, under pain of sin, to the performance of them. For example, if abstinence from flesh-meat be required as one of the conditions for gaining an Indulgence, abstaining on Friday will not be sufficient, as we are already bound to abstain on that day by a precept of the Church.

If prayers be required as a condition, the reciting of prayers already imposed on us as a Sacramental penance, will not suffice for gaining the Indulgence.

Q. What are the other good works which the Church usually prescribes in order to gain Indulgences ?

A. Prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds ; which good works, besides Confession and Communion, Indulgences promote ; and on this account, also, they are most useful to Christian people.

6. "The other good works", besides a good Confession and Communion, "which the Church usually prescribes, in order to gain an Indulgence", are "prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds". With regard to "prayer", it is almost in every case prescribed, in order to gain an Indulgence. To pray according to the intention of the Pope, that is, for the extirpation of heresies and schisms, for the propagation of the Catholic Church, for peace and concord among Christian princes, and for the general necessities of the Church, five *Paters* and five *Aves* are generally said, to comply with the conditions required ; but any other prayer, equivalent, will fulfil the condition, such as the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the *Miserere*, or a decade of the Rosary. If we be accustomed to say the Rosary, we can offer it, or part of it, with the intention of gaining the Indulgence, and it will suffice for that purpose.

7. "Fasting" is one of the other good works sometimes prescribed by the Church to gain an Indulgence. It is what the Holy Scriptures, as well as the example of Christ and His saints, recommend to us. We can scarcely read the life of any Saint, but we find that they invariably mortified themselves by fasting.

8. "Alms-deeds", according to a person's abilities, are also sometimes prescribed, to gain an Indulgence. When the quantity of alms to be given is not determined in the grant of the Indulgence, every one should then give alms in proportion to his or her means. This proportion should be regulated by the rules of prudence and discretion, and according to the intention of the Granter. Should any one give less than he ought to give, according to his means, he would not be thereby deprived of all the benefits of the Indulgence, though he would gain a great deal more benefit by increasing his liberality; for, as St. Thomns says, "when the quantity of prayers and alms are not determined precisely by the granter, then the greater quantity of alms well given, and of prayers well said, will entitle the performer of both to a proportionably greater share in the Indulgence granted".†

9. All these "good works, besides Confession and Communion, Indulgences promote"; and so far from their being "a pardon for sins to come, or a license to commit sin", or as "a method of making poor wretches believe that wickedness here may become consistent with happiness hereafter",* they "are most useful to Christian people", on account of the many good results which flow from them. "Christian people" know full well, that the more good works they do, and that the greater the fervour be with which they perform them, the greater will be the remission of the *temporary punishment* due to their sins, and the more abundant will be the fruits which they will derive from Indulgences.

Q. Should all the good works prescribed by the Pope, to gain an Indulgence, be done in the state of grace?

A. No; it is not necessary that all the good works should be done in the state of grace.

* Bishop Porteus.

10. It is the commonly-received opinion among Divines, that to gain an Indulgence it is not necessary that every good and prescribed work shall be done in the state of grace, but it is sufficient if the last of these good works be performed in the state of grace, for it is at that time the Indulgence is gained. The reasons of this opinion are, that these good works are not required as meritorious and satisfactory, but as conditions and dispositions necessary to gain the Indulgence.

11. Though it be not necessary that the prescribed works should be *all* performed in the state of grace, yet it is, doubtless, necessary that these works should be done with a penitential spirit, and without any affection to mortal sin; for no good works can be properly said to be true dispositions to obtain a release of temporal punishment, unless these works be really performed either in the state of sanctifying grace, or with a true penitential spirit, and, consequently, without any affection to mortal sin. Hence it follows clearly, that every one will more fully and more amply gain all the benefits of an Indulgence, in proportion to the state of sanctifying grace he is in while he is performing the prescribed good works, and in proportion to the contrition he has for his sins whilst engaged in doing those good works. Hence it follows, also, that few, very few, after performing the necessary conditions for gaining a plenary Indulgence, are thereby exempted from suffering some punishment in the other world, for it rarely, very rarely, indeed, happens, that a person does not retain an affection to some venial sin or other; and while a person retains an affection to any venial sin, he is neither forgiven that sin nor the temporal punishment due to it.

Q. Can indulgences be gained and applied to the souls in purgatory?

A. Yes; when in the grant of indulgences it is declared that they are applicable to them.

12. It may be necessary to remark at first, that there is a difference between the Indulgences for the living and the Indulgences for the Dead, and to point out that difference. Indulgences for the living may be fitly compared to payment made, and acquittal given, for all debts; and Indulgences for the Dead may be likewise compared to a full payment offered for debts, but it cannot be known whether it be received or not. Indulgences for the living are acts of judicial authority done by a commission from Christ, whereby the debts of the living are paid by the Church; but the Church having no authority over the Dead, cannot free them in the same manner. All that the Church does in this case, is to offer the full value and amount of their debts, and to beg of God to accept the payment.

13. This being the case, Indulgences can be applied for the souls in Purgatory, and contribute greatly to free them from that place of punishment; for it is an allowed truth in the Catholic Church, that the faithful here can apply their satisfactions for the souls in Purgatory, and that such satisfactions are very serviceable to these souls. Now, by a parity, just in every respect, the Church can apply to the same souls the satisfactions of Christ and the Saints, which satisfactions are contained in the treasury of the Church, and are left to the Church's disposal. Again, the Church can grant Indulgences to the living, therefore also to the souls in Purgatory; for no good reason, according to St. Thomas, can be assigned why the common merits should not be given over to one as well as to the other, both being members of the same Body. It is also the constant practice and perpetual tradition of the Catholic Church, that Indulgences are very useful to the souls in Purga-

tory. It is necessary to observe, that when Indulgences are granted for the living only, they cannot then be applied with any advantage to the Dead; for to be applied with any advantage to the faithful departed there must be special mention made of the deceased in the Bull. When a soul for whom the Indulgence is applied is not in Purgatory, but in Heaven or Hell, then the benefit of that Indulgence falls back again into the common treasury of the Church, or is applied by God's judgment—secret and unknown to us—either to souls who want it most, or to those whose works of mercy, while here below, entitled them, in some respect, to such an application. Hence it is recommended to every one who applies an Indulgence to a person deceased to make a conditional application of it to another, in case the first could not profit by it.

Q. Which is it more meritorious to apply an Indulgence to a soul in Purgatory or to one's self?

A. It is more meritorious to apply it to a soul in Purgatory.

14. It is the opinion commonly received among Divines, that it is more meritorious to apply an Indulgence to the Dead than to a person's self; for, as they say, where there is greater charity there is also greater merit. Now, there is certainly greater charity in bestowing our property on our neighbour, to free him from punishment, than to reserve that property for ourselves; therefore, there is greater merit in applying an Indulgence to the dead than in reserving it for ourselves. Besides, it is a much greater virtue to give some of our necessities to the poor than to give them our superfluities. This is exactly the present case in reference to applying Indulgences for the souls in Purgatory.†

Q. Which is the greatest and most solemn of all Indulgences?

A. The Indulgence of a Jubilee.

15. A Jubilee—a word derived from the Hebrew, *jobel*, and signifying joy, gladness, remission, liberty—is a plenary Indulgence granted by the Pope, with certain solemnities, and accompanied by great favours and particular privileges, to all those who perform the prescribed works. There are two kinds of Jubilee, one an ordinary Jubilee, and the other an extraordinary Jubilee. An ordinary Jubilee is that which now recurs every twenty-five years, and is called the Jubilee of the Holy Year; an extraordinary Jubilee is that which the Pope, induced by important reasons, grants sometimes in the intermediate space of twenty-five years. This extraordinary Jubilee is usually granted in the beginning of every Pope's reign, in order to draw down the blessings and graces of Heaven on the new Pope. Boniface VIII. revived the Jubilee in the year 1300, *Antiquorum in Extra*, but was not the first to establish it. He determined that it should be granted and held every hundredth year. Afterwards, Clement VI. reduced this period to fifty years, in imitation of the Jewish jubilee, from which it has borrowed its name. Urban VI. afterwards reduced this period still more, and made it thirty-three years, corresponding with the years of Christ's life. Paul II., considering the shortness of man's life, and the severity with which God punishes the sins of mankind, reduced it to every twenty-five years; and this is the interval of time observed between every ordinary Jubilee since his time.

16. The Jubilee of the Holy Year is opened with great solemnity in Rome, on the evening before Christmas day, and continues for a whole year. This period of time was granted in order to induce the faithful, from all parts, to flock to Rome, and to unite their prayers, in that first See and centre of Christianity, for the propagation of the faith and the

conversion of mankind, as also to pay due honour to the tombs of the Apostles, and to beg their intercession and protection for the Church. To encourage the faithful still more to go to Rome during this year, it was usual to suspend all other Indulgences whatsoever, granted by Popes to any other parts of the world. This regulation was made in the time of Sixtus IV., but has varied at different times since ; but, in general, all Indulgences, whether plenary or partial, have been suspended, or much restricted, during the Holy Year. When the Jubilee of the Holy Year has expired, after twelve months' continuance in Rome, it is then communicated to all other countries in Christendom.

17. An extraordinary Jubilee is usually granted on the accession of every Pope to the papal chair, since the time of Sixtus V. No one can gain the Indulgence of the Jubilee twice, nor profit of the privileges annexed thereto, unless it be specified to the contrary in the Bull or Brief. A Jubilee does not grant a more plenary remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, than any other plenary Indulgence usually granted by the Church, but it has many advantages annexed to it, which other plenary Indulgences have not. First, all approved Confessors have extraordinary privileges granted to them at this time, with respect to all sins, censures, reserved cases, and the like. Secondly, the Indulgence of a Jubilee being more universal—all Roman Catholics of the world performing penance for their sins together—inclines the God of mercy to bestow on His people greater favours. Thirdly, the penitential and satisfactory works prescribed are greater than the works and prayers usually prescribed in times of other plenary Indulgences, and consequently they furnish a greater certainty of gaining more benefit from the Indulgences of a Jubilee, than any

one could derive from performing the satisfactory works prescribed to gain other Indulgences.

Q. Are there extraordinary privileges granted to Confessors at the time of a Jubilee?

A. Yes; Confessors can commute vows and absolve from reserved cases.

18. The privileges granted to Confessors are sometimes greater, and sometimes less, as some Bulls grant more than others. In general, however, the following privileges are usually granted. It is permitted to every one to choose any Confessor, approved in the diocese where he lives, and this Confessor is empowered to absolve from all reserved cases, and from all censures whatsoever, except Heresy. Every approved Confessor has power to change all kinds of vows into other good works, nearly equivalent to the obligations of the vow; but he must necessarily impose some good works nearly on an equality, otherwise he would grant a dispensation, and not merely commute. But it should not be forgotten, that this commutation of vows should not be made capriciously, but always for sufficient and well-founded reasons. When these reasons occur, and a change of vows is judged necessary, then any obligation that was perpetual by the vow should be changed into some other perpetual obligation, but more convenient and less painful than the former. Obligations that were personal should be changed into other personal obligations, and real obligations into real. A vow of perpetual chastity, and of entering into religion, are always excepted, and ever reserved to the Pope. A Confessor cannot make use of his privileges but in the Confessional alone, and in favour only of those who seriously intend to profit of the Jubilee in its full extent. If the penitent be not able to perform all the works prescribed by the Bull for gaining the

Indulgence, the Confessor can, in that case, change these works into other works which the penitent is able to perform. Though Communion, in all who can communicate, be necessary in order to gain the jubilee, yet children who are not judged fit for receiving the Blessed Eucharist, on account of their age, may gain the Jubilee without it, provided they perform all the other works prescribed.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE SECRETS OF THE CONFESSIONAL.

* The Catholic man or woman who has something or other as a source of mental anxiety and fretting—something that has been said or done, the keeping of which in his own bosom is breaking his heart—the Catholic man or woman knows that in the first priest he meets, he has a friend whom God has provided for him; in whose honour and secrecy he can place implicit confidence; who can give him as much relief as Jesus Christ would give him if He came to him. He knows he can trust to the secrecy of the priest; for in truth, my friend, the Catholic priest has no merit for keeping secrets—he has no secrets to keep. The priest sits in the Confessional and hears the sins of the penitent in one ear. He pauses for an instant, looks at that sin; judges its gravity, its enormity, and the circumstances; says a few words of advice, and tells the penitent, “You must avoid this thing or that; this sin is greater than you imagine; see the injury you have done; see how painful to the heart of God such an action must be, for He says so and so in the Scriptures”; and he gives such and such advice; and he lets the sin out of the other ear, and it does not stay in his mind at all. Saint Augustine says, in his own admirable manner: “The priest knows less about what he hears in the confessional than if he never heard it at all”. The man going to confession is like a little child taking a pebble from off the sand, and, going over the waters, on a still, calm day, he drops the pebble into the lake. For an instant there is a ripple upon the water;

but the wavelets die away; the face of the water becomes smooth again, and the pebble that the child dropped, no man, no human eye shall ever see again. We go to confession! we drop our sin before the priest; we tell him of such and such a deed. For an instant it makes a ripple upon the organ that receives it; for an instant the wavelets of consideration are rippling over the mind of the priest; then that mind settles into its own calm serenity again. The sin is gone; but no eye of man upon the earth, nor of gossiping demons in hell, nor of angel in Heaven, shall ever behold that sin again.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE DYING YOUTH RECEIVING A PLENARY INDULGENCE.

† Edmund Lebouc, when about the age of seventeen, fell dangerously ill. He did not disguise from himself the serious nature of his illness; but on the second day of his disease, he calmly said that he would not recover. In a few days he became very bad, so much so, that the attending physician recommended the administration of the last Sacraments. When the *viaticum* was held before him, he hesitated for a short time before receiving it, saying: "I cannot communicate to-day, for I have eaten something". But when he was told that to receive the *viaticum* it was not necessary that one should be fasting, he received it with the greatest sentiments of joy and love. Then having received the sacrament of extreme unction, he asked what he should do to gain the plenary Indulgence at the hour of death. When he was told the great effect of the Indulgence, and how he was to receive it, he said: "And if I die after having received it, shall I go to Heaven?" "Yes, my child", answered the Priest. "Oh, what happiness!" he cries out; "I am about to enter Heaven! I am going to die! How content and happy I feel in dying! I am going to Heaven!" The pious young man having received the last Sacrament with sentiments of the most lively faith and ardent love, and having gained a plenary Indulgence, resigned his soul, a few days after, into the hands of God.

APPLICATION OF INDULGENCES AND PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

† Rosignoli, in his *Wonders of God in Purgatory*, which he wrote at the request of the Blessed Sebastian Valfré, of the Turin Oratory, relates from the Dominican annals, an interesting dispute between two good friars as to the respective

merits of devotion for the conversion of sinners and devotion for the Holy Souls. Fra. Bertrando was the great advocate of poor sinners, constantly said mass for them, and offered up all his prayers and penances to obtain for them the grace of conversion. "Sinners", he said, "without grace are in a state of perdition. Evil spirits are continually laying snares for them, to deprive them of the Beatific Vision, and to carry them off to eternal torments. Our Blessed Lord came down from Heaven, and died a most painful death for them. What can be a higher work than to imitate Him, and to co-operate with Him in the salvation of souls? When a soul is lost, the price of its redemption is lost also. Now the souls in purgatory are safe. They are sure of their eternal salvation. It is most true that they are plunged into a sea of sorrows; but they are sure to come out at last. They are the friends of God; whereas sinners are His enemies, and to be God's enemy is the greatest misery in creation".

Fra. Benedetto was an equally enthusiastic advocate of the suffering souls. He offered all his free masses for them, as well as his prayers and penances. "Sinners", he said, "were bound with the chains of their own will. They could leave off sinning if they pleased. The yoke was of their own choosing. Whereas, the dead were tied hand and foot against their own will in the most atrocious sufferings. 'Now come, dear Fra. Bertrando, tell me—Suppose there were two beggars, one well and strong, who could use his hands, and work if he liked, but chose to suffer poverty rather than part with the sweets of idleness; and the other sick, and maimed, and helpless, who, in his piteous condition, could do nothing but supplicate help with cries and tears,—which of the two would deserve compassion most, especially if the sick one was suffering the most intolerable agonies?' Now this is just the case between sinners and the Holy Souls. These last are suffering an excruciating martyrdom, and they have no means of helping themselves. It is true they have deserved these pains for their sins; but they are now already cleansed from those sins. They must have returned to the grace of God before they died, else they would not have been saved. They are now most dear, inexpressibly dear, to God; and surely charity, well-ordered, must follow the wise love of the Divine will, and love most what He loves most".

Fra. Bertrando however would not give way, though he did not quite see a satisfactory answer to his friend's objection. But the night following he had an apparition, which it seems so convinced him, that from that time he changed his

practice, and offered up all his masses, prayers, and penances, for the Holy Souls. It would appear as if the authority of St. Thomas might be quoted on the side of Fra. Benedetto, as he says, "Prayer for the dead is more acceptable than for the living, for the dead are in the greatest need of it, and cannot help themselves as the living can".—*Father Faber.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is Confession a necessary condition for gaining a plenary Indulgence?
2. If a person confess every week, can he gain all the Indulgences within that week?
3. Will a Confession made a week before the Indulgence suffice to gain it?
4. Is Communion a necessary condition to gain a plenary Indulgence?
5. Must every other good work required as a condition to gain an Indulgence, be faithfully complied with?
6. For what intention must we pray, to gain an Indulgence?
7. Is fasting required as a condition to gain an Indulgence?
8. Are alms deeds necessary to gain an Indulgence?
9. Are Confession, Communion, praying, and fasting, promoted by Indulgences?
10. Is it necessary that the conditions required for gaining an Indulgence should be performed in the state of grace?
11. Should the good works required for an Indulgence be done in a spirit of penance?
12. What is the difference between Indulgences for the living and Indulgences for the dead?
13. Can Indulgences be applied for the souls in Purgatory?
14. Is it a greater merit to apply an Indulgence to the departed than to oneself?
15. How many kinds of Jubilee are there?
16. What are the circumstances connected with a Jubilee of the Holy Year?
17. What are the advantages of the Indulgence of a Jubilee over a plenary Indulgence?
18. During a Jubilee, have Confessors more than ordinary powers?

PRACTICE.

1. When you are about gaining an Indulgence, prepare yourself carefully for the reception of the Sacraments.
 2. Every morning, have the intention of gaining all the Indulgences attached to the good works which you are to perform during the day.
 3. Frequently apply the Indulgences you gain for the souls in purgatory.
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PRAYER.

O sweet Jesus ! we thank Thee, and shall never cease returning Thee thanks, for all Thou hast done for us. To redeem and save our souls, Thou hast died for us on the cross, and hast left us Thy body and blood for our food and nourishment. During life, and at the hour of our death, Thou strengthenest and consolest us by means of the holy sacraments. And to remit or relax the temporal punishment due to our sins, Thou hast given to Thy Church the power of granting us Indulgences at every time during life, but particularly at the hour of death. Blessed for ever be Thy holy name, O Lord ! and may we for ever praise and glorify Thee, for Thy great love and kindness. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON EXTREME UNCTION.

Q. What is Extreme Unction?

A. A Sacrament which gives grace to die well; and is instituted chiefly for the spiritual strength and comfort of dying persons.

1. God, who is infinitely good, has not only prepared for us salutary helps during life and whilst in the state of health, but has also instituted a Sacrament to comfort us in sickness, and, particularly, at the approach of death, when temptations are most violent and dangerous. This Sacrament is called "Extreme Unction", because it is the last anointing which a Christian receives. The first anointing takes place in Baptism, the second in Confirmation, and the last in dangerous sickness. "Extreme Unction" is a true and real Sacrament of the New Law, for it has all the three things necessary to constitute a Sacrament, which are, 1. an "outward sign"; 2. the "institution of Christ"; and 3. "the inward grace" conferred on the soul, of which the outward act is a sign.

2. The "outward sign" is the anointing of the different organs of our senses with holy oil, blessed on Holy Thursday, in a particular manner, by the Bishops, for this purpose, and accompanied by certain prayers. The *anointing* with holy oil is the *matter* of the Sacrament, and the words recited, and accompanying the unction, is the *form*. The "in-

ward grace" is represented by the outward sign ; for as oil is often used to soothe and heal wounds, and restore bodily strength to parts that have been weakened, it is, therefore, very appropriately used to signify similar spiritual effects produced in the soul by the last anointing ; and the words or prayers which accompany the anointing, determine it to such a signification, by expressing the nature of the grace received.

3. "The institution of Christ", by which "inward grace" is caused by the "outward sign", is clearly proved by these words of St. James : "Is there any one sick among you ? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall have the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him"—*St. James*, v. 14, 15. These words of St. James clearly prove the practice of the Catholic Church, and declare "Extreme Unction" to be a Sacrament, that is, an outward sign, ordained by Christ to confer inward grace. "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him"—by the sanctifying grace of God, which shall wash and purify the soul from all relics of sin that may remain in it, so that he may appear with joy before his God. From the words of St. James, it is also evident, that he only describes and promulgates what Christ had instituted ; because the Apostle could not give to outward acts and ceremonies the power of producing grace, pardon, or any other spiritual effects, as it is only God who can give grace. Therefore, when the Apostle declares and pronounces these effects, it is, and must be, in consequence and in virtue of, the *institution of Christ*.

4. This Sacrament of Extreme Unction "gives grace to die well, and is instituted chiefly for the spiritual strength and comfort of dying persons"

It was upon this account that our Saviour Jesus Christ instituted it. For if our Lord instituted the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, the Blessed Eucharist, and the other Sacraments, that we might be assisted and succoured at the time we enter life, and during our journey through it—if, at our entrance into this world, with our souls stained with original sin, He meets us through His ministers on the boundaries of life, and cleanses us at once from the foul stain by means of baptism—and if, as we grow up and mix with the world, He strengthens our soft and young hearts against the many temptations which beset us, by means of Confirmation—if, when through frailty and the assaults of the devil we fall into mortal sin, He restores us to His friendship and favour, by means of the Sacrament of Penance—if, when we are weak and faint as we journey through life, He recruits and refreshes us by the bread of Heaven, the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist—if He has thus helped us through life, we surely cannot think that He will be wanting to us when we are about leaving this world, especially since we never want more help and assistance than at the hour of our death.*

5. Therefore, in instituting this Sacrament, the intention of our Blessed Saviour was, that it may give us “grace to die well”, and comfort us in our last moments—fortifying our souls against the violent attacks of our spiritual enemies, and enabling us to die in holiness and in friendship with our God. The Council of Trent declares that such is the end and design of this last Sacrament in these words: “As our most merciful Redeemer, who desired that His servants should at all times be provided with wholesome remedies against the darts of their enemies, in the other Sacraments gives Christians the greatest helps, to enable them to pass their lives in a Christian manner, and free from any grievous spiritual detri-

ment ; so He hath fortified the latter end of our life with the most powerful protection of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. For, though our adversary seeks, and seizes, during our whole life, every possible occasion of ruining our souls, yet there is no time wherein he more vehemently exerts all his strength and art to ruin us entirely, and destroy, if possible, our confidence in the mercy of God, than when he sees the last moments of life approaching"—Sess. xiv. in doct. de Extr. Unct.

Q. Does the devil attack souls with more violence than ordinary at the hour of death?

A. He certainly does, and his assaults are most violent and dangerous in our last moments.

6. Though at all times "the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour", as St. Peter tells us, yet he redoubles all his force, and all his art, when our last moment arrives. The reason is, that he knows our death is drawing near, and that he has only a very short time to make his assaults upon us. At the end of a few days or hours we will be either God's or his for eternity, and so he makes the most of the short time to direct every effort against us: "The devil is come to you", says St. John, "having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time".

7. His assaults at the time of our death are not the same with regard to all persons. No ; he varies them according to the dispositions of the persons whose souls he is endeavouring to ruin. There are some whose damnation he brings about by what is called presumption, that is, suggesting to them very good thoughts to all appearance, such as that God is good and merciful ; concealing from them, at the same time, the enormity of their past crimes, and God's hatred of them. Other souls he destroys by

inducing them to have their thoughts continually on their families and worldly goods, and the pleasures which they are going to leave; thus diverting their thoughts from the great object of life and death—the eternal welfare of the soul.

8. But his common temptation is to terrify poor sinners with alarm and affright at their past sins, in order to cast them into despair. On this subject St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “What terror, what trembling, what a combat attends a soul going out of the body! since, in that dreadful hour, a multitude of wicked spirits will then be present to you, laying open, and objecting to you, all the sins you have ever committed in your whole life, either in thought, word, deed, or omission”. St. Hilarion, when on the point of death, was oppressed with such fear, as we are told by St. Jerome, that to encourage his soul, he said: “Go forth, my soul, why dost thou fear? thou hast now served God almost these seventy years, and art thou afraid to die now?”

9. Now, if the saints themselves have been thus terrified at the hour of death, what are we, sinners, to expect, who have committed a great many sins, and a great many mortal sins, and committed them not only in our young days, but even very lately, and have done scarcely any penance for them? Now, when our poor souls come to this last and dreadful battle, what can we do? If left to ourselves, we shall surely perish. Ah! it is to meet this—to meet these frightful and terrible assaults of hell—that our good Jesus instituted the Sacrament of “Extreme Unction”, by which we are enabled to fight manfully against the wiles and furious onslaughts of the demon.†

Q. Is Extreme Unction given to all persons in danger of death?

A. No ; only to such as are in danger of death by sickness.

10. Extreme Unction cannot "be given to all persons in danger of death", but only to the members of the Church who "are in danger of death by sickness". Hence, it cannot be given to soldiers engaged in battle, to people in a storm at sea, or to persons going to be executed by order of justice, because, though they are in danger, and it may be, imminent danger of death, yet they are not "in danger of death by sickness". And it is only of such as are "in danger of death by sickness" that the Apostle speaks, when he says : "Is there any one sick among you?" But persons dying in battle, in consequence of their wounds, as also shipwrecked persons washed ashore in whom life is not yet extinct, can and should be anointed. Children, before they come to the use of reason, and idiots and insane persons who *never* had the use of reason, cannot receive this Sacrament ; because, not having ever sinned, nor having any *remains* of sin, and not being liable to any temptations to sin, they are incapable of receiving any effects from it. Again, all who die impenitent, or in the actual commission of mortal sin—as a man shot in a duel, or a drunken man wounded, and dying in his drunkenness—cannot receive this Sacrament, except there be some reason to think that at the moment of death they feel sorrow for their sins.

Q. Should the danger of death by sickness be extreme, in order to receive Extreme Unction ?

A. No ; because by deferring Extreme Unction to the time that we are in extreme danger of death, we deprive ourselves of some of its effects, if not of all.

11. It is sufficient to be dangerously ill to receive Extreme Unction ; for while the mind remains unimpaired, the sick person is better disposed to receive

it, and to profit of its many advantages. In deferring it to the last moment, one runs the risk of not receiving it at all; for many who delay it are overtaken by death before it can be administered. To restore the sick person to health, if it be conducive to his everlasting salvation, is one of the effects of this sacrament: "the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up".

12. This Sacrament principally, says St. Liguori, heals and saves the soul; and, as the Council of Trent teaches, it sometimes heals the body, when the restoration of health is profitable to the soul. Hence, we can infer how useful it may be to the health of the body to receive Extreme Unction as soon as possible—that is, as soon as the physician declares the disease to be grievous and dangerous to life—without waiting till there is no hope of recovery; because it is then impossible, in the natural course of things, for the sick man to recover; and for the restoration of his health, it would be necessary that God should work a miracle. But, when the sick man is in a state of being cured by natural means, the virtue of this sacrament will, as has been said, obtain for him bodily health, if his recovery be conducive to his spiritual welfare. Thus, in order to give this sacrament to the sick, it is sufficient that their infirmity be grievous, as Benedict XIV. has declared. This sacrament principally regards the health of the soul: "And the Lord shall raise him up". The Council explains these words, saying: "It relieves the soul of the sick one, by exciting in him hope of the Divine mercy, supported by which he beareth more patiently the afflictions of his disease, and more easily resisteth the temptations of the devil". It is, then, a grievous sin to defer the holy Unction until all hope of recovery is lost, life begins to ebb, and the sick person is fast falling into a state of insensibility.

13. One great reason why this Sacrament is neglected and deferred when persons are in danger of death, is lest they should be alarmed; as if a person ought to be afraid to receive a remedy which may and will restore his health, if it be profitable and conducive to his salvation. If, then, you have the least faith in the word of God, if you have the least love for your parents, children, friends, and relations, you should never prevent this sacrament, but you ought at once to procure it for them. Many sick persons, given over by the physicians, were so persuaded of the efficacy of this Sacrament, even for the restoring of corporal health, that they preferred receiving it to the best remedies prescribed by the most experienced physicians; and this sovereign antidote, both of body and soul, received by them with faith and confidence, restored them to their health. It is because it strengthens both soul and body, that Extreme Unction is called by the Church in her Councils, and by the Holy Fathers in their writings, *Medicina corporis et animæ*, that is, the remedy of body and soul.

Q. How should we prepare ourselves for Extreme Unction?

A. By a good Confession; and we should be truly sorry for our sins, and resigned to the will of God, when we are receiving the last Sacrament.

14. We should prepare ourselves for Extreme Unction "by a good Confession; and we should be truly sorry for our sins"; for the first disposition to obtain the benefits of this sacrament, is to receive it in the state of grace, because it is one of those sacraments which are instituted to increase grace, and,

consequently, presuppose the state of grace. This is why the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is not ordinarily given, until the sick person has received the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. The sick person should, therefore, prepare himself, first, "by a good Confession", telling all his sins with sincerity and true sorrow to the Priest, and humbly receiving absolution of all his offences against God. If he be conscious of being in a state of sin, but cannot confess—being deprived of his speech, for example, though otherwise in his senses—he "should be truly sorry for his sins", and repent sincerely of them, whether great or small, known or unknown, uniting his prayers with the prayers of those present, when saying the *Confiteor*, to excite in himself the sentiments of compunction and true sorrow.

15. Another disposition for receiving Extreme Unction is "to be resigned to the will of God, when we are receiving the last Sacrament"—making acts of faith, of love, of confidence, of acceptance of our sickness, and of resignation to His divine will under our infirmities and anguish. Sick persons, it is true, are not forbidden to employ all lawful means to ease their pains, and restore their health; they can pray for the recovery of their health, after the example of Jesus Christ, when He cried out in the garden of Olives: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me"; but they should, at the same time, "be resigned to the will of God", and add with their agonizing Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, "Yet, my God, not my will, but Thine be done", putting themselves in the same holy dispositions with Him, and, like Him, offering to God the Father their bodies, their souls, and their lives, in a spirit of sacrifice, "when receiving the last Sacrament".

Q. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. It remits sins, at least such as are venial, removes the *relics* of sin, and gives us strength and comfort in our last moments.

16. As to the effects which Extreme Unction produces in the soul, there are three or four principal ones. The first is, the remission of sin ; for although this Sacrament is not principally instituted to confer sanctifying grace, but only an increase of it, nevertheless, if the sick person should be oppressed by any sin, even a mortal one, which through inculpable ignorance he has not confessed, it would be effaced by virtue of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, according to the words of St. James : “ If he be in sins, they shall be remitted him”. You must here observe, that the Apostle says : “ If he be in sin”, because he supposes the sick person has already received the Sacrament of Penance, and that thereby his sins have been remitted. Again, when a sick person, after absolution, falls into mortal sin, and then repents of it with real attrition, and has the intention of confessing it, but, through insensibility, is unable to confess it, the sin is remitted by the Sacrament. And therefore, in administering this Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the exterior senses are anointed, which are as the doors by which sin enters, to teach us that by this anointing we are purged and cleansed from all our sins ; and for this reason, the Priest, administering this Sacrament, exhorts the sick person to excite in himself a hearty sorrow for sin at the time when he is being anointed.

17. The second effect of “ Extreme Unction” is, that this Sacrament removes the *relics* or remains of sin already pardoned. This appears from the Council of Trent, and from the words which are made use of in the form of this Sacrament, which are as follow :

“Through this holy unction, and by His own most tender mercies, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight”; and so of the other senses. But that you may comprehend what I mean by the *relics* of sin, I call it a certain weakness or spiritual languishing, which remains, and is the consequence of evil habits, contracted by the frequent acts of sin, which gives us a certain bent, and inclines our perverse wills to fall back again into it—a darkness of the understanding, a hardness of the heart, an affection to sensible things, and the like. Again, by the *relics* of sin are to be understood a certain perplexing interior grief, apprehension, and anguish, which are caused by the remembrance of our sins, and put us in concern and trouble, knowing that we are about to be presented before a terrible Judge. All these are the *relics* and effects of past sins, and these Extreme Unction takes away. The third effect of this Sacrament is, that it gives grace to the sick person to make a good use of all his pains and sufferings during his sickness, and disposes him to resign himself entirely to the will of Almighty God, either for death or for life.

18. The fourth and principal effect of this Sacrament, and for which it was chiefly instituted by our Saviour Christ, is to give us strength to surmount the assaults of the devil, which are much more violent and dangerous in our last moments, than in any other part of our lives; for as he knows that the time is near when he must either gain or lose his prey, he doubles his efforts, and makes use of all his arts to draw a poor soul into his snares. What can a sick man do in the midst of so many enemies, who have sworn his ruin—enemies strong and cunning—and he weakened, both in body and mind, by the severity of his sickness? And if your bodies, dear children, even in the time of health, are a clog upon the facul-

ties of the soul, what do you think the poor soul can do at the point of her separation from the body, when assaulted by demons, who will endeavour to make her believe there is for her no hope of Heaven? How can their evil suggestions be rejected? If the greatest Saints found themselves so alarmed by this terrible combat, what can the poor sinner do, if God does not assist him? "Extreme Unction" it is that will support and strengthen us against all these assaults and continual attacks of our spiritual enemies, so that this reason alone, if there were no other, should oblige persons in danger of death by sickness, to have recourse to this Divine remedy.†

19. Another effect of this Sacrament is, to restore the sick person to health, if it be conducive to his everlasting salvation. The receiving of it should, therefore, not be postponed to the last moments of life, for surely it is not the time to expect to be restored to life, when a person is on the point of breathing his last. But it may be asked, why so few persons recover, after having received this Sacrament? Cardinal Bellarmine assigns two reasons for it. The first is, that sick persons, generally speaking, defer for so long a time the reception of this Sacrament, that they seem to tempt God, and, as it were, oblige Him to work a miracle, when their strength is quite spent. The second reason is, because death is oftentimes more advantageous to the sick person than health would be.

Q. Who are appointed to administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. The Priests of the Church, as St. James teaches, and so the Church has constantly practised—*James*, v. 14, 15.

20. "The Priests of the Church", as we learn from

St. James, "are appointed to administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction". These words of St. James, "Let him bring in the Priests of the Church", declare and determine such only as are actually promoted, in virtue of holy ordination, to Episcopal or Priestly orders : so that whenever the Scriptures in the New Testament, speaking of Church ministers, use the word Presbyter or Elder, it always means, says St. Jerome, one invested with Priestly or Episcopal dignity. Again, the Fathers in the Council of Trent, and all Catholic writers, understand by the words Presbyters of the Church, such only as are Priests truly ordained, whether they be Bishops or mere Priests. Neither could the Apostles mean, by Priests of the Church, lay-elders, as some of our adversaries would have it, because they are not Church ministers, taken in a proper sense. The administration of this Sacrament, therefore, is committed to Priests—not, however, to every priest—in accordance with the decree of the Church, but to the *proper* Priest who has jurisdiction, or to another authorized by him. In this Sacrament, as in the other Sacraments, it is also to be distinctly understood, that the Priest is the representative of Jesus Christ and of His Church.

21. "And so the Church constantly practised" the administration of Extreme Unction, by her Priests. St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and other Fathers, expressly exhort the sick to "receive this sacrament from the hands of the Priests of the Church". Pope Innocent I., celebrated for learning and sanctity, in his Epistle to Decentius, Bishop of Gubio—an epistle held, in every age, in the greatest esteem by the Church—mentions Extreme Unction of the sick, by the "Priests of the Church", as a perpetual and universal Divine law and holy Sacrament, and declares that a Bishop has authority to administer it as

well as simple Priests, as he is more than a Priest, and because the holy oil can be consecrated only by a Bishop.

Q. In what manner is Extreme Unction administered?

A. The Priest administers Extreme Unction by anointing the sick person, reciting at the same time certain prayers.

22. The sick man, having made his Confession, and received the Holy *Viaticum*, the Priest proceeds to the administration of the last Sacrament. Being vested in a purple stole, he first sprinkles both the chamber and the persons present with holy water, and then calls on God to give peace to that house and all that dwell in it. Then having prayed for the sick man, that his sins may be forgiven, and that he may be restored to health, he lays his thumb on the holy oil, and anoints, in the form of a cross, the different senses of the sick man's body, that is, the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet; and whilst anointing each part, he recites a prayer corresponding to that sense: "By this holy anointing, and through His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing—and so of the other senses.—Amen". The organs of the five senses are anointed, and necessarily so, as they are the chief instruments in our commission of sin. The feet too are anointed, and in some places the loins of men; but the latter is not of necessity. The anointing is made in the form of a cross, to recall to the mind of the sick person that he is a disciple of Christ crucified, and that he ought to endeavour to unite himself with Him by resignation in his infirmity to God's will. The Priest having anointed the sick man, prays again for him, begging of God that He may grant him remission of his sins, assist

him in his last struggle, with His Divine grace, and grant him every assistance and spiritual consolation.

Q. Can Extreme Unction be administered more than once in the same sickness?

A. No; it cannot be given more than once.

23. There was a time when Extreme Unction was repeated in the same sickness on seven consecutive days. A great many rituals make mention of this custom, and as one that was of obligation. According to the present discipline of the Church, Extreme Unction can be administered only once in the same sickness, or rather during the *same state* of sickness; for if a person seem better, though not recovered, and become worse again, Extreme Unction may be repeated, for he has fallen into a new danger of death. In doubt whether a person became better in the same sickness, it is more conformable to the ancient discipline to reiterate the Sacrament, and more advisable, particularly in tedious diseases.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. MALACHY'S GRIEF AT A PERSON DYING WITHOUT BEING ANOINTED.

* St. Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, tells us that the lady of a certain knight, who dwelt near Bangor, in the north of Ireland, being at the point of death, St. Malachy was sent for, and after suitable exhortations, prepared himself to give her extreme unction. It seemed to all her friends better to defer the sacrament till next morning, when she might be

better prepared to receive it. St. Malachy yielded to their earnest entreaties, though with great unwillingness. The holy man, having made the sign of the cross upon the sick woman, retired to his chamber; but was disturbed in the beginning of the night with an uproar through the whole house—lamentations and cries that the mistress was dead. The bishop ran to her chamber, but found that she had departed life; whereupon, lifting up his hands to Heaven, he said with bitter grief and remorse: “It is I myself who have sinned by this delay, not that poor creature”. Desiring earnestly to render to the dead what he accused himself she had been deprived of by his neglect, he continued watching over the corpse, and praying, at the same time, with many bitter tears and sighs. From time to time, turning towards the by-standers, he said to them: “Watch and pray”. They passed the whole night in sighs, and in reciting the psalter and other devout prayers; when lo! at the break of day, the deceased lady opened her eyes, sat up, and knowing St. Malachy, saluted him with a devout bow. At this sight all present were amazed, and their sadness was at once turned into joy. St. Malachy anointed her without delay, knowing well that by this sacrament sins are remitted, and the body receives help, as is most expedient. The lady, to the greater glory of God, recovered, and lived some time to perform the penance imposed upon her by St. Malachy, then relapsed, and, with the usual succours of the Church, happily departed.—*Alban Butler.*

STEPHEN THE HERMIT AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

† St. John Climacus, a celebrated writer, and one worthy of credit, relates a remarkable example of how persons are assaulted by devils at the hour of death. There was one Stephen, a hermit, he says, who after he had lived a great part of his life in solitude, fasting, watching, and praying, at last fell sick; and when he was at the point of death, the devil set upon him, and objected many things to him. Sometimes he cried out (so that all who were present heard him), “So it is indeed, I confess I did it; but I have fasted and prayed so many years for it”. Other times he cried out, “Thou liest, I did not do it”; and again he said, “It is so indeed; but I have shed tears for it; yet notwithstanding”, said he, “there is need of mercy”. This example ought to make you be wary in all your actions, and to fly sin, and all the occasions of sin; since this holy man, who had lived near forty years a retired and holy life, was so hard pressed by the devil at the hour of his death.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION:

1509

A FATHER'S SOUL SAVED BY THE PIETY OF HIS DAUGHTER.

‡ A man who lay dangerously sick, had an only daughter, a child not more than ten years old, who had learned her catechism very well, and was instructed in the truths and practices of our holy religion. She stood by the bedside of her dying parent, and seeing no preparation for his receiving the Sacraments, she said: "Father, you are very sick; the doctor has just said you shall not live longer than to-morrow; and mamma has since been weeping bitterly in the next room. Now, I have heard at instructions that it would be very sinful to allow the sick to die without being prepared by the Priest, and yet no one speaks to you about it. Do, father, so send for the priest". Affected by the artless simplicity and earnestness with which these words were uttered, the dying man said: "My dear child, I thank you; go for him at once—and may God bless you; for to you, under God, I am indebted for my salvation". The Priest came and administered the last Sacraments to the sick man, who died the following day. Frequently did he repeat before his death, "Oh, what would become of me, were it not for my dear child?" How consoling to her during life, to reflect that she had been the instrument of so much happiness to her dying parent.—*Lasausse*.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why do you say that Extreme Unction is a Sacrament?
2. What is meant by the outward sign and inward grace of the Sacrament?
3. How do you prove that Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ?
4. Has our Lord instituted Sacraments to assist us through life?
5. Why has our Lord instituted Extreme Unction?
6. Why does the devil assault us, in particular, at the hour of our death?
7. Does the devil assault all persons in the same way?
8. In what way does he usually assault persons at the hour of death?

9. If the saints have been assaulted at the hour of death, shall we also?
10. To whom can Extreme Unction be given?
11. Is it wrong to defer Extreme Unction until the sick person is extremely ill?
12. What says St. Liguori about not deferring Extreme Unction?
13. Why should persons not defer Extreme Unction?
14. Is Confession and sorrow for a sin a necessary disposition for Extreme Unction?
15. Is resignation to God's will a necessary disposition for Extreme Unction?
16. Does Extreme Unction ever forgive mortal sin?
17. Does Extreme Unction remove the relics of sin?
18. What is the principal effect of Extreme Unction?
19. Has Extreme Unction the effect of restoring corporal health?
20. Who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?
21. Has it been always the practice of the Church to have Extreme Unction given by Priests?
22. In what manner is Extreme Unction administered?
23. Can Extreme Unction be given more than once in the same sickness?

PRACTICE.

1. Be careful in obtaining timely the Sacrament of Extreme Unction for your neighbour.
2. Whenever you can, assist at the administration of Extreme Unction, and pray for the sick person.
3. Ask God now for those graces that you would pray for if dying.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! we bless Thee a thousand times for Thy great goodness in instituting the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and affording us, at the hour of our death, such a powerful remedy against the assaults of hell. In our sickness, we shall never neglect so powerful a means of obtaining from Thee pardon of our sins, and strength and support

against the enemies of our salvation. Grant, dear Lord, that when our last hour shall have come, we may be fortified by the last Sacrament, and receive by means of it comfort and consolation in our pains and infirmities, and perfect resignation to Thy holy will in our last dying moments. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON HOLY ORDERS.

Q. What is Holy Orders ?

A. A Sacrament which gives Bishops, Priests, and inferior Clergy to the Church, and enables them to perform their several duties in it—*Phil. i. 1.*

1. The five Sacraments which we have already explained, regard the well-being of each and every Christian. The two others, of which we are now about to treat, regard the well-being of the entire Church. The Sacrament of "Orders" gives to the Church, Ministers and Pastors for the government of it. The Sacrament of marriage furnishes new subjects to the Church, who, becoming her children by Baptism, perpetuate it to the end of the world. These two Sacraments are not, as the other five, necessary for all the faithful, and that is the reason why each one is at liberty to receive them or not, just as he thinks proper. We shall, in the first place, speak of the sacrament of "Holy Orders".

2. The word *order* has many significations. It means (1) the arrangement and disposition of men and things according to their rank and position. It

is in this sense that we say that God has set all His works in admirable order. It means (2) a law or rule established by nature, authority, or usage ; and it is in this sense that we say that things are done, or not done, according to order. It signifies (3) a community whose members are bound to live according to certain rules, having some outward mark to distinguish them ; and in this sense we speak of the Order of St. Francis or the Order of St. Benedict. It means (4) the commands of a superior, spiritual or temporal. And, in the last place, it signifies a Sacrament of the Church, by which power is given to fulfil Ecclesiastical functions ; and in this latter sense we shall speak of "Orders", or "Holy Orders", so called because when a person once enters into them, he is dedicated entirely to the service of God and His Church, and can never more return to the world.

3. As Christ, dear children, has founded a Church here upon earth, it is not to be doubted but that He has ordained and instituted rulers to keep and govern this His Church in discipline, and to preserve it in unity. This is what St. Paul assures us of, in his epistle to the Ephesians, where he tells us that Christ has given to His Church certain men, to be Apostles, Pastors, and Preachers, who being, as it were, His ambassadors, should instruct and edify His Church, and keep His people in unity and faith. And as the Sacraments are necessary for man's salvation, so it is necessary for certain men to be ordained, and authorized by God, to administer them faithfully.

4. Holy Orders is "a Sacrament which gives Bishops, Priests, and inferior Clergy to the Church". Holy Orders is a Sacrament, for it has all the three things required to constitute it one ; which are, "an outward sign", an "inward grace", and the "institution by Christ" of this outward sign, which gives

this inward grace. Now it is certain that in "Holy Orders" there is a visible or "an outward sign"; for in it there is the imposition of the Bishop's hands, and prayer, with the delivery of those things connected with that power which is communicated; for we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the seven Deacons were ordained in this manner: "The Apostles praying laid their hands upon them"—*Acts*, vi. 6. In "Holy Orders" there is the invisible or inward grace, which is the power of the Orders received, with an indelible character imprinted on the soul; and also actual grace for the due exercise of Orders, together with an increase of sanctifying grace. This "inward grace", conferred by the "outward sign" or imposition of hands, with prayer, is attested by St. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy: "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee, by the imposition of hands"—*II. Tim.* i. 6.

5. In "Holy Orders" there is, in the third place, the "institution of Christ". St. Paul says, that this Sacrament confers grace by the imposition of hands with prayer: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which is given thee by prophecy, with the imposition of hands of the priesthood"—*I. Tim.* iv. 14. Now it is evident from these words of St. Paul, that "Holy Orders" has been instituted by God, because it is only God who can give to outward things the power of producing grace in the soul; and when outward things are made a certain and efficacious means of grace, it must be in virtue of the institution of Christ. From the texts of Scripture we have quoted, it then clearly follows, that "Holy Orders" is an external rite, permanently instituted by Jesus Christ, "to give Bishops, Priests, and inferior Clergy to the Church, and to enable them to perform their several duties in it", by communicating to them the graces

necessary for that purpose. As there are in "Holy Orders", as we have seen, all the conditions required for a Sacrament, namely, a visible or an outward sign, the virtue of producing grace, and the institution of Jesus Christ, it is, therefore, necessarily a Sacrament.

6. The holy Council of Trent has anathematized all who deny that "Holy Orders" is not truly and properly a Sacrament, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; and the general Council of Florence declares "Holy Orders" to be a Sacrament, and even calls it the sixth. In fine, all the Councils and the Fathers of the Church have always acknowledged and looked upon Holy Orders as a true and proper Sacrament.

Q. What are the dispositions necessary to receive Holy Orders worthily?

A. The dispositions required to receive Holy Orders worthily are, that a person have a vocation from God, received Confirmation, and that he be in a state of grace.

7. The first disposition required for Holy Orders is, that a person be truly called by God to that holy state, and does not intrude himself into that sacred office: "Neither doth any man take the honour to himself", says St. Paul, "but he that is called by God, as Aaron was"—*Heb. v. 4*. We should embrace no state whatever without having consulted God, and endeavoured to know His holy will; but this precaution is much more necessary when there is question of a state, the functions of which are so holy and sublime as those of Holy Orders. "You have not chosen Me", says Jesus Christ to His Apostles; "but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit"—*John, xv. 16*.

8. To know whether God calls you to the great dignity of the Priesthood, you should in particular examine yourself as to the motives which induce you

to embrace that state—whether you are influenced by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of your own and your neighbour's soul, or by worldly interests or ambition, a desire to become respectable, and enjoy the pleasures of life. Now, God does not call you to the priesthood, if you find that your end and object be, in embracing that state, to live more at your ease, to find therein repose, idleness, worldly comfort, to heap up riches, to be honoured and esteemed by men. All these motives are bad; and if you have any such, your vocation is not from God, but rather from the devil. This truth is learned from St. Bernard, in those remarkable words: "All those", says he, "who, in ecclesiastical orders, seek either honour or riches, or the pleasures of this life, and, in a word, who seek their interests, and not that of Jesus Christ, without doubt are not moved to this state by charity, which is from God, but by covetousness, which is the enemy of God, and the source of all evil".

9. Your intention, then, must be good, and to be so it must have for its end the sanctification of your own soul and the salvation of your neighbour's, which are the two general obligations of that calling. That is, you should propose to yourself to live in that state a holy and exemplary life, and contribute to the salvation of souls by your prayers, labours, and all possible means, according to the same St. Bernard, who says, that "he who would enter into the Orders of the Church, and be received into the ministry of the Sanctuary, ought to have this intention—to belong to God with an absolute disengagement from the things of this world, in a perfect purity of mind and body, to be illuminated by Him, and procure therein his own salvation, and that of his neighbour, by applying himself to prayer, and to the dispensation of the word of God".

10. In deliberating on your choice of this state, or preparing yourself for it, set frequently before your eyes those excellent words of St. Augustin. Writing to a friend of his, who asked his advice concerning the Ecclesiastical state: "I entreat you", said he, "before all things, that in your virtuous wisdom, you will consider well that there is nothing in this life, and principally at this time, more easy, more light, and more acceptable to men, than the duty of a Bishop, of a Priest, or of a Deacon, if it be negligently discharged; yet, there is nothing more miserable, more dreadful, and more damnable in the sight of God. Besides, as there is nothing in this life, and at this time, more difficult, more painful, and more dangerous, than the office of Bishop, Priest, or Deacon; yet, if they acquit themselves of it as they ought, and according to the will of our Master, there is nothing more happy in the sight of God"—Ep. 134.

11. The second disposition for receiving Holy Orders worthily is, that we should have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation, as the Sacrament of Holy Orders is not conferred on those who have not been previously confirmed. The third disposition is, that we should be in the state of grace; for Holy Orders being a Sacrament of the *living*, requires that our soul should be free, at least, from mortal sin, when we are about receiving it; and it would be an awful sacrilege, indeed, to receive so holy a Sacrament in the state of deadly sin.

Q. How many different Orders are there?

A. There are seven—porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon, deacon, and priest.

12. "As the ministry of so exalted a priesthood", says the Council of Trent, "is a divine thing, it was meet, in order to surround it with the greater dignity

and veneration, that in the admirable economy of the Church, there should be several distinct orders of ministers, intended by their office to serve the Priesthood, and so disposed, as that, beginning with the clerical tonsure, they may ascend gradually through the lesser to the greater Orders". Of these seven Orders, some are greater, and these are called "holy"; some lesser, and these are called "minor Orders". The greater or Holy Orders are sub-deaconship, deaconship, and Priesthood. The Episcopacy is included in the order of the Priesthood, as being its plenitude. The lesser or minor orders are porter, reader, exorcist, and acolyte.

13. These seven distinct offices are called Orders, because they are so many different steps or degrees, laid down in a regular order, by which the sacred powers of the Priesthood are gradually communicated to him who enters into the Ecclesiastical state. For he must first begin with the lowest, or door-keeper, and so gradually ascend to the higher degrees, or to a more ample share in these sacred powers, after having spent a competent time in the exercise of the lower orders, and, by his good behaviour there, given proof of his deserving to be advanced to those that are higher.

Q. Are the powers of the Priesthood of different kinds?

A. Yes; they are separable one from the other, and some of them may be communicated to any one person, without the others.

14. As the number of Christians was increasing, it would have been impossible for one man to administer the effects of all priestly powers to a great number of souls; and, on the other hand, it would be a source of endless dissensions that a great many Pastors should be placed over the same people, having

equal power and authority, and without any subordination among themselves: therefore, the Apostles, as instructed by their Divine Master, communicated to some the plenitude of the priestly and pastoral power, such as they themselves received from Christ. Those to whom this power was communicated, are the chief Pastors of the Church and the successors of the Apostles, and are called "Bishops", who are constituted by the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul tells us, "to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood"—*Acts*, xx. 28.*

15. To others they communicated only part of these priestly powers, particularly that of consecrating the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and of offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, and that of administering the Sacrament of Penance by the power of binding and loosing, with all the other Sacraments, except Confirmation and Orders. These are the Pastors of the second order, successors of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord, and are properly called "Priests"; because the essential power of the Priesthood consists in offering up Sacrifice to God for the sins of the people, according to St. Paul: "every High Priest... is appointed, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins". To others they communicated only the powers of preaching and baptizing, and of assisting the priest at the altar, when offering up the Holy Sacrifice; and these are called "Deacons", or servants, from this last branch of their office. Others they employed in preparing the matter for the Sacrifice, in having the charge of all things about the Altar, in keeping them clean and in proper condition, in assisting the Deacons when serving at the Altar, and in singing the Epistle at Mass, when it is celebrated with all its solemnities: and these are called "sub-deacons". †

Q. How many are the lesser or minor Orders of the Church?

A. Together with the three degrees of Holy Orders, there are four minor Orders.

16. Besides the three degrees of "Holy Orders", there are also four lesser Orders, which regard the inferior offices and services of the Church—not immediately connected with the Sacrifice of the Mass—and are called "minor Orders", because those who enter them have it still in their power to leave the service of the Church, and return to the world. These four are called, as we have already mentioned, the porter, the lector, the exorcist, and the acolyte. From these minor Orders, the candidates for the Church are promoted to the greater, as to that of Sub-deacon, which is the first of those that are called Holy, then to that of Deacon, and lastly to that of Priest. The holy Scriptures not only make express mention of Priests, but also of Deacons; and though it makes no mention of the order of Subdeacons, nor of any of the four lesser Orders, yet, from the beginning of the Church they were known to be exercised.

17. The first Order is Porter, or door-keeper, whose office is to keep the keys of the Church, sacristy, and treasury. The second is Lector, or Reader, whose office is to recite aloud the lessons in the Divine Office, and who formerly had to instruct the faithful in the rudiments of the Christian religion. The third is that of the Exorcist, whose function is to read the exorcisms and prayers of the Church over those who are possessed by unclean spirits. The fourth degree is that of Acolyte, and is the last of those Orders that are called lesser, whose office is to serve at Mass, light the candles in the Church, prepare the wine and water, and attend the greater ministers during the time of Sacrifice. All these lesser Orders are conferred by receiving from the Bishop

the instruments or books belonging to their respective offices, and by solemn prayer prescribed in the pontifical.

Q. Are Bishops superior to Priests, and the other ministers of the Church?

A. Yes; Bishops are, by Divine right, superior to Priests, Deacons, and the other Ministers of the Church.

18. The different Orders, of which we have just spoken, form what we call the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. With regard to the power of Orders, all Bishops are on an equality, as being successors of the Apostles. But as we have said, when speaking of the Pope, or Head of the Church, the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, has, by Divine right, a superiority, or *Primacy*, not only of honour and dignity, but also of authority and jurisdiction,* over all the other Bishops. The Bishops are also, by Divine right, superior to the Priests in authority and jurisdiction, as well as in Orders.

19. That Bishops are superior to Priests, and hold the first rank in the sacred Hierarchy of the Church, is an article of Divine faith, declared as such by the Church of Christ in the Council of Trent, and is founded on the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. It is evident, that the Apostles were raised by Jesus Christ to a much higher rank and dignity than that of the other disciples; for "He called to Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them, whom He also named Apostles"—*Luke*, vi. 13. He kept them always in His own company; He instructed them, in particular, in all the things He had heard from His Father, as His particular friends—*John*, xv. 15. After His resurrection, He said to them only: "As My Father hath sent Me, I also send you: whose

* See vol. I. chap. xxxviii.

sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained"—*John*, xx. 23. To them, in particular, He said: "Go ye unto the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature"—*Mark*, xvi. 15. Now, the Bishops are successors to the Apostles, and inherit the plenitude of the Priestly powers, which Christ communicated to them; whereas, the Priests are only the successors of the seventy-two disciples, and receive these powers only in part.*

20. That the Bishops are superior to Priests is also evident from the practice of the Church of Christ, and from the condemnation, in the fourth age, of Arius as a heretic, for denying this doctrine. From the earliest ages, whenever a Bishop was consecrated, a certain portion of the faithful was assigned to him for his particular charge as their pastor; and the place where this charge was given him was called his Diocese: thus, Titus was ordained by St. Paul to be Bishop of Crete, and Timothy to be Bishop of Ephesus. In these Dioceses they exercised the full Pastoral authority, both in preaching the word, administering the Sacraments, and making such laws and regulations as they judged proper for the good of their people, and this they did by their own proper authority, independent of any other. Whereas the Priests were always considered only as their Vicars or Assistants, subject to their laws, and who had no authority, even to administer the Sacraments, but only as far as they were empowered by their Bishops to do so, by receiving faculties from them. And these faculties the Bishops could give in what measure and proportion they judged fitting, or refuse them entirely, if they saw cause; and this has been the constant practice of the Church to this day.

* See vol. i. chap. xl. on Bishops, Parish Priests, and Vicars.

Q. Why are Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons obliged to live single and chaste?

A. All those in sacred orders are obliged to live single and chaste, by a command of the Church, that they may better dedicate themselves to God.

21. The Church strictly commands all her Clergy, in Holy Orders, to lead single and chaste lives; and the great Council of Trent pronounces an anathema upon any one who shall dare to affirm that, notwithstanding this prohibition of the Church, it is lawful for any of them to marry. There are many reasons why the Church has enjoined celibacy on her ministers. In the first place, a life of purity and chastity is more excellent, more perfect, and more acceptable to God than the married state, as is evident from the Epistles of St. Paul.

22. If even married people are recommended by the Apostle to live chaste "for a time, that they may give themselves to prayer", which is particularly to be understood when they are preparing themselves to receive Holy Communion; and if he assigns as a reason, that "it will enable them to attend upon the Lord without impediment", why should not Priests, whose very office is daily to attend unto the Lord, "and to the ministry of the word", live continent and chaste, as it is a means to make them attend to the Lord, and to their holy functions, without impediment? Again, the Church, wisely considering that it is the very essential duty of those who enter into the Priesthood to be solicitous only for the things of the Lord, and not for the things of the world, on this account obliges all those of the Priesthood to live a chaste and single life, as being declared by St. Paul to be most proper and conducive to the end of their vocation: "I would have you to be without solicitude; he that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but

he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided"—I. *Cor.* vii. 32.

23. The duties of their state, as Pastors of the flock of Jesus Christ, make the married state, in a manner, incompatible with their vocation; for they are chosen by Jesus Christ, and *separated* from the rest of mankind for the service of "the gospel of God"; they are dedicated, by their vocation, to this holy service of God and His gospel, and are obliged to give their whole attention to the good of their people's souls—to instruct them, to administer the Sacraments to them, to comfort them in their distress, to assist them in their sickness, and especially when death approaches: and, for this purpose, to answer their calls at all times, by night or by day, even though at the risk of their own lives, when the good of their people's souls requires it. Now, it is evidently incompatible with the cares of a wife and family to discharge all these duties properly; and, therefore, St. Paul says: "No man, being a soldier of God, entangleth himself with worldly business, that he may please Him to whom he hath engaged himself"—II. *Tim.* ii. 4.

24. The Church, well knowing that no kind of worldly business so much entangles a man, and draws him from the duties of the pastoral charge, as the cares of a wife and family, therefore, expressly requires her Pastors to abstain from a state so inconsistent with that charge. In the Apostles' time, when the Church was in its infancy, there was a necessity for receiving married people into the priesthood, because, for want of labourers in the vineyard, there was no room for choice, and, therefore, the Apostles did not make any express law against doing so; yet, we find the strongest injunctions in their sacred writings, that all who were admitted into that

holy state should live chaste and continent lives. In consequence of this, we find, from the earliest monuments of antiquity, that, even when married people were admitted into the sacred ministry, they generally abstained from all cohabitation with their wives ever after. And, in process of time, when the number of the faithful increased, so that there was no difficulty of getting young people to be trained up to the service of the Church, the law of celibacy was made, for all the above reasons, obliging all who entered into sacred Orders to observe perpetual chastity.

25. And, indeed, nothing more admirably shows the finger of God, than to see such vast numbers as embrace the ecclesiastical state, living in the strictest purity, even amidst the many dangerous occasions to which their necessary communication with the world, in their charge of souls, so frequently exposes them. It is not by the strength of nature or constitution that they live in such purity: nature is incapable, by its own strength, of practising a virtue which is so opposite to all the most violent inclinations of flesh and blood. It is the grace of Jesus Christ alone which betows this gift upon them; and the chaste and continent lives they lead is a manifest proof of the interposition of God, and of His divine approbation of the conduct of the Church, in requiring the faithful observance of this virtue from her Ministers.

Q. What are the duties which the faithful owe to their Bishops and Pastors?

A. The faithful should venerate, honour, love, and obey their Bishops and Pastors.

26. We should, dear children, honour, respect, and love the Pope, the Bishops, and our Pastors, because they represent Jesus Christ, and hold His place on this earth. They are ordained by God to be the

judges over His people, in such things as appertain to the salvation of their souls; to be their governors and rulers in all that regards religion; and likewise to be their ghostly and spiritual fathers. By them we are made Christians, and received into the Church; by them we are delivered from our sins, and reinstated into the grace and favour of Almighty God; by them we receive His blessings, and are nourished and fed, not only with the spiritual food of God's word, but also with the Heavenly food of Christ's most precious body and blood in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; by them we offer to God the august Sacrifice; in fine, by them the Sacraments are administered, and the Heavens are opened to us. We ought, therefore, to hold them in reverence, according to the admonition of St. Paul, "as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God": remembering that he who heareth and obeyeth them, heareth and obeyeth God; and he who disobeys them, disobeys God; for the reverence which is given to God's ministers is given to God, and the contempt of them is the contempt of God.†

27. Again, besides the love, reverence, and respect which we owe to the Bishops and Priests of God's Church, we must also be obedient to them in all that appertains to our eternal salvation and the government of the Church; for to them our blessed Saviour has committed the keys of His kingdom, by which they have a power and jurisdiction over all Christians for the conservation and increase of virtue, and good of the Church; and this power all Christians ought to obey under pain of mortal sin, since it comes from God, so that he who disobeys this power, disobeys God, says St. Paul to the Romans. We must therefore be careful not to despise and condemn the authority of the Ministers of the Church, since St. Paul exhorts all men to be obedient to their

spiritual rulers: "Obey your prelates", says he, "and be subject to them, for they watch over you, as being to render an account of your souls"—*Heb.* xiii. 17. Besides, we must not only honour them, love them, and obey them, but we must also succour and relieve them in their corporal necessities, and that with a free heart and good will; for, as St. Paul says: "Who doth serve as a soldier at his own expense? or feeds a flock, and eats not of the milk of the flock?" And again, in another place, he says, that they who administer to the people spiritual things, ought likewise to receive of the people corporal things. § ||

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CARDINAL XIMENES.

* Cardinal Ximenes, when he was made Archbishop of Toledo, still maintained his usual simplicity of life, riding on an ass, as he had been in the habit of doing before his elevation, or going on foot between monks of his order. He would have no hangings on the walls of his chambers, or any sumptuous furniture; in short, such were his love of poverty, and dislike of all outward pomp, that the Pope was constrained to admonish him that, while living with an innocent conscience towards God, he should order his dress, retinue, and other things in such wise as beseemed the honour of his state and dignity. Ximenes obeyed, and henceforth appeared in public with the magnificence usual in his time and country. One day, on the occasion of some state ceremony, he made his appearance clad in a garment of very valuable skins; upon which a preacher publicly reproached him to his face with wearing a tunic of such great price as would have sufficed to support half the poor of Toledo. The Cardinal received the rebuke with the utmost humility; he invited the preacher to his table; commended his sermon during the repast, and thanked him for his counsel; then, drawing aside the splendid robe, he showed him the hair-shirt which he wore next his skin, thus intimating to him that, while presenting to the

eyes of men the splendour and adornments of a bishop, he observed in secret the poverty and austerity of a Franciscan monk. His biographer further relates, that the precious robe had been presented to the Cardinal by a man of rank; that he kept it a few days, in order that he might not seem to slight the donor; but that afterwards, under pretence of an illness from which he was suffering, he sent it back, as being unfit for him at such a time.

THE PRIEST OFFERING THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

† In virtue of His Incarnation He received the priesthood. "This day have I begotten Thee", says the Eternal Father; "Thou art unto Me a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech". He was ordained a priest the moment that in Mary's immaculate bosom He took our flesh and blood, the moment that Mary, bowing down her head, said, "Fiat" ("Be this done unto me"), that moment she was the Mother not only of the Eternal God made Man, but she was the mother of the Priest Jesus Christ. Now, dearly beloved, when our Divine Lord said to His apostles, "This do ye in commemoration of Me", He passed unto them mystically, but most really, the mysterious power and character and attribute of His own priesthood. The Priest, therefore, as a priest, is the representative of Jesus Christ. In the pulpit, speaking under the supervision of a watchful and infallible Church, responsible to that Church for every word that his lips utter, he represents the Word of God Incarnate and instructing the people in the language of truth. But when he clothes himself in the sacred vestments and ascends the holy altar, he is something more than a mere representative of Jesus Christ. He is there as Priest only, scarcely any longer as a man only so far as the man is necessary for the purposes of the priesthood, but the man is altogether priestly, in other words, the action is altogether that of the Son of God, the Priest Jesus Christ. Therefore it is that from the moment he ascends that altar and enters upon the Canon of the Mass, and especially at the moment of consecration, the individual man who is there seems to disappear, for he no longer speaks as a man, but he speaks as the Son of God. He speaks the words of consecration as if it was his own body and his own blood he was speaking of. He takes the bread into his hands, reminds the Eternal Lord and Everlasting Priest of His promise and His mission, and then, entering entirely into the very person of our Divine Saviour, he says over the bread, "This is My body", and that moment it

becomes the body of the Lord. He says over the wine, "This is My blood", and that moment it is the blood of Jesus Christ. Behold, therefore, how, although a man may stand there, yet the priest is still Jesus Christ our Lord. The words are His, the action is His, the power and the efficacy is His. Oh! would that the sanctity of that unworthy celebrant were only as that of Jesus Christ! If, then, such be the Victim—if such be the Priest—what shall we say of the altar? How holy must it be! What wonder if from the beginning the choicest woods of the forests, the choicest marbles and precious stones of the earth, are gathered together carefully and thoughtfully by the Church of God, wherewith to build her holy altars. What wonder when we consider the high purpose for which they are raised. There are all our debts paid. We owe unto God first of all a debt of adoration and of praise, but how shall we pay it? The word and the command of Scripture is—"Laudate Dominum secundum multitudinem misericordiæ Ejus". Praise the Lord, O ye people, and praise Him according to the measure and the multitude of His greatness. That is to say, give Him infinite praise, for His greatness is infinite; and who can pay this infinite debt? The sadness of despair must come upon us. We are like the poor servant in the Gospel, who, not having a penny, was indebted to his master for ten thousand talents, and with the same servant we can approach the altar, and say, "O Master, have patience with me, and I will pay Thee all". Yes, let the priest approach, let him put forth the mystical words of consecration; presently there is One there, our brother in our human nature, Who will pay to His Eternal Father for us all the debt of infinite adoration and praise to the Lord according to the multitude of His greatness. We owe unto God the debt of propitiation for our sins. How many are those sins, how deep the dye of their iniquity, each one can answer for himself. Perhaps those who are accounted the best in the midst of us, when he kneels alone before God, is obliged to say with the Psalmist, "My iniquities are superabundant; they are as the sands of the sea of God". Yet one of those sins, even one, brings with it so much guilt that we incur an infinite debt of satisfaction and propitiation. How shall we pay? We must turn again to the holy altar, and there the language is spoken, and the cry goes forth of blood, crying out more loudly for pardon and mercy, than the blood of Abel, the first innocent victim, cried out for vengeance upon his destroyer. We owe unto God the debt of thanksgiving; for, oh! how much have we not received from Him, and how unworthy have we been of His

graces! A thousand fall daily at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, and yet God keeps the punishment of death away from us. Graces and blessings have anticipated our youthful faltering steps. Where many have fallen God has enabled us to stand! where many nations have gone away from the faith and the truth, our fathers received in the day of their dire necessity the holy and the high grace of fortitude even unto death for the faith of God, and that precious faith is the grace of our inheritance. How much, then, have we received both as a people and individually from the Lord our God, and how little have we deserved His gifts! Therefore may we exclaim with David of old, "Quid retribuam? Quid retribuam"? What shall I return to Thee? What return shall I make to Thee, O God, for all that Thou givest to me? Call the priest to the altar, put him there vested and clothed in the character of the Eternal Priesthood of the Son of God, and he will place upon the altar One Whose simplest word is infinite thanksgiving to God. He will place upon the altar One Who worshipping and adoring commands the attention of all Heaven, and Whose words fall so sweetly unto His Father's ears and upon His Father's heart, and a voice comes from Heaven and cries, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased".—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

RESPECT, OBEDIENCE, LOVE, AND GRATITUDE DUE BY THE PEOPLE TO THE POPE, BISHOPS, AND PASTORS OF THE CHURCH, FOR THEIR LABOURS AND SUFFERINGS IN DEFENDING AND MAINTAINING THE FAITH.

† And proud am I, brethren—I, who for some years past have been a waif and a wanderer on the great waste of waters, living as a missionary Bishop on a lone island at the Antipodes—proud am I, when I return once more to the old land in which I was born, to find the attachment of the Irish people to the Pope and to the faith of their fathers more intense, if possible, more active, and conspicuous than at any past period of her history. Yet for these great and truly exceptional favours which you have received from on High; for Ireland's unalterable attachment to the faith; for her unbroken hierarchy, happily crowned in our days by an Irish Cardinal, whose fame for wisdom and sanctity is over all the Churches; for her unpurchasable priesthood, and the unswerving fidelity of her noble-hearted people, humanly speaking, you could have no good grounds to hope. Ours, you know, was not amongst the Churches that were most favoured

in their origin. There were Churches founded by the Apostles themselves, protected by the Emperors of Christian Rome, and presided over for a long series of years by the most pious and enlightened pastors. The Church of Ephesus, founded by St. John, has long since fallen to decay. The Church of Alexandria exists no longer, though St. Mark laboured much to give it strength and stability; and even the Church of Jerusalem itself, governed, as it had been, for a number of years by St. James the Apostle, formed no exception to the decline of other Apostolic Churches. What has become of the illustrious Churches of Asia and Northern Africa, of the Churches in which Chrysostom preached, for which Cyprian suffered, and Augustine wrote? Weeds are now growing over the ruins of Carthage; and in the Capital of the Eastern Empire, built as it was by the first Christian Emperor, and adorned by the piety or patriotism of his successors for above a thousand years, the Crescent has long since displaced the Cross, and the fanatical followers of the Arab Prophet prefer Mahomed to Christ—the licentious teaching of the one to the sublime morality of the other.

But here, in this remote island, now so undistinguished, but once the fairest in the sea, the lamp of faith once lighted has not suffered even the dimness of an hour. Like the sacred fire guarded by the Vestals of another age and clime, we have preserved our faith pure, and in all things unchanged, during the long, long period of fourteen hundred years. True, indeed, that in some respects our Church's first glory has gone down; that the saint and the scholar journeying from afar have long since ceased to seek shelter on our once hospitable shore; true that our religious houses of European fame, the abodes of piety, of peace, and learning, and which formed the chief glory and greatness of this ancient island, teach now no lesson except by their ruins; true that our sceptre is broken and our name is without honour in the councils of the great; still may we boast with pride and truth that we have preserved our faith untarnished, undiminished, unalloyed midst the revolution of empires, and the utter ruin of seemingly more favoured Churches. Furthermore, brethren, look around you everywhere on the scattered children of your creed and race, and what do you behold? Abroad you see our Irish missionaries labouring for God's Church in every land that the sun shines upon, and carrying the glad tidings of redemption to the people of every clime and colour. At home you see the sublime spectacle of a poor and but recently emancipated people building up and beautifying the fallen

temples of the Most High, supporting the ministers of their Church in more than ordinary comfort and respectability, erecting colleges, schools, hospitals, houses of refuge, and without government aid or countenance from the great, walking, I may say, in the van of Christian civilisation, and sustaining the great cause of Christian progress and enlightenment in this island. And oh, brethren, is it not sweet, is it not passing sweet, to see the homes of our forefathers thus built up, their memories vindicated, and the faith for which they fought and bled rising from off the ground on which it was trodden down—ay, and rising with renewed vigour and endowed with marvellous fecundity? Catholicity, you see, cannot die. The long list of saints who professed and practised it, the million martyrs who died in its defence, the host of scholars who sprang up under its auspices and did battle in its cause, the virtue that it fosters, as well as the civilisation that it has scattered even to the ends of the earth, attest beyond dispute the divinity of its origin. Error, brethren, is not lasting—fiction fades away, even art's most glorious monuments must perish! but truth is not subject to diminution or decay, and what is built on it is as enduring as the heavens. Cleave closely, then, brethren, to this fine old faith of yours. Be proud of it; profess it fearlessly; practise it; live in it; and as the last and most precious remnant of your mutilated inheritance, forfeit it not even in death. It is no new fangled faith, framed or fabricated but a while ago. It is the faith which Christ taught upon the earth, and wherewith He enriched His Church. It is the faith of the Apostles and of the elect even from the beginning. It is the faith for which the martyrs suffered, and the just were persecuted in every age. It is a faith which the proud philosophy of Rome vainly sought to overthrow—a faith, therefore, at once pure, consoling, and apostolical; a faith unaltered by time, untainted by error, indestructible by sword, or sage, or sophist, a faith, in short, which, as it preceded, so shall it survive, every modern innovation, and yet resume that empire over the world which truth has never forfeited but for a while. Such, brethren, is the faith of our fathers, the faith of which his Holiness the Pope is the fearless and infallible expounder. May it be to you an active faith, as it will be a lasting and cherished one, influencing your thoughts and deeds and words, and giving value to them all. And, as you do now praise, and bless, and pray for those who in bright days built up, and in evil days defended, the time honoured edifice of your native Church, so may generations yet to come praise you and bless you, telling to their children, and to the children of them again, that you

of the present age were well worthy of the saints that preceded you, that you "were zealous for the law, and prepared to give your lives for the covenants of your fathers; that you called to remembrance the works of your fathers which they had done in their generations, and that you deserved great glory and an everlasting name"—*I. Mac.*, ii. 50, 51.—*Most Rev. Dr. Croke.*

THE RESPECT OF ST. FRANCIS AND OF ST. ANTHONY FOR PRIESTS.

§ St. Bonaventure, in his *Life of St. Francis*, tells us, that the saint had so great a respect for priests, that it was a saying of his, that if he should meet an Angel and a Priest together, he would honour the Priest in preference to the Angel. St. Anthony, the great patriarch of so many thousand hermits, had such veneration and respect for Priests, that if he met one he fell on his knees, and rose not up till he had received his benediction. And the Emperor Constantine the Great held the Bishops and Priests in such respect, that he would not sit down in the Council of Nice till after all the Bishops had been seated, and even then he sat only upon a seat below them all, and with their approbation. And when many libels were brought to him, during the council, filled with the ill-behaviour and vices of some Priests, he would not read them, but commanded them to be publicly burnt, saying, that it was a wicked thing to libel those whom God has constituted to be our judges and rulers.

ST. MARTIN'S RESPECT FOR PRIESTS.

|| St. Martin of Tours happened to go to Triers, to intercede with the Emperor Maximus in favour of certain persons who were condemned to death for adhering to their late master, Gratian. Though St. Martin was the subject of Maximus, he discovered the greatest reluctance to communicate with him; and when he was invited to dine at the Emperor's table, he declined more than once the invitation. St. Martin was at length prevailed upon to accept the invitation, which gave the Emperor the greatest satisfaction, who ordered a great entertainment to be made, and invited the most considerable persons of the court, and, among others, his uncle and brother, both counts. The priest who accompanied St. Martin was seated in a most honourable place, between the two counts, and on the same couch; and St. Martin occupied a low seat

near the Emperor. In the midst of the entertainment, an officer presented the cup, as usual, to Maximus, who ordered it to be given to St. Martin, expecting that the saint would at once present it to him; but when the bishop had drank he gave it to his priest, as the most worthy person in the company. The action was applauded by the Emperor and the whole court.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are the Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony necessary for all the faithful?
2. What are the different significations of the word order?
3. Is it necessary that certain persons should receive Holy Orders?
4. How do you prove that Holy Orders is a Sacrament?
5. How do you prove that Holy Orders has been instituted by God?
6. Have the Councils and Fathers declared that Holy Orders is a Sacrament?
7. What is the first disposition required for Holy Orders?
8. How are we to know whether we have the first disposition required for Holy Orders?
9. In what consists a good intention in receiving Holy Orders?
10. What says St. Augustin regarding the ecclesiastical state?
11. What are the other dispositions required for receiving Holy Orders?
12. What do you call the different kinds of Orders?
13. Why are the different offices of the Priesthood called Orders?
14. Are the different kinds of Orders separable one from the other?
15. What are the powers communicated to the Priests by the Apostles?
16. What are the degrees of minor Orders, and are they mentioned in the Scripture?
17. What are the respective offices of those in minor Orders?
18. Is the Pope superior to the Bishops, and are the Bishop superior to the Priests?

19. Can you prove from Scripture that Bishops are superior to Priests?

20. Can you prove from the practice of the Church the superiority of Bishops over Priests?

21. Why is it that the Church enjoins celibacy on her ministers?

22. Can you show from St. Paul that Priests should observe chastity?

23. Is the marriage state incompatible with the duties of the Priesthood?

24. Was chastity observed in the early ages of the Church?

25. Is the celibacy of the Priesthood acceptable to God?

26. Should we respect and love our Bishops and Pastors?

27. Should we be obedient to the Bishops and Pastors of the Church?

PRACTICE.

1. Always honour and respect the ministers of the Lord, considering them as holding the place of Christ.

2. Never speak evil of God's ministers, and avoid the company of those who rail at them and hold them up to ridicule.

3. If your Pastors are not altogether blameless, cover their defects with the mantle of charity; for a child should not expose the faults of his spiritual father.

PRAYER.

O good Jesus! we thank Thee for having given us Pastors to instruct us, and lead us to Heaven by their admonitions and example. We shall ever entertain for them respect and love, knowing them to be appointed by Thee as our rulers and spiritual guides. If we have ever, by deed or word, slighted or contemned them, we now, with sorrow, bewail our offence against them and Thee; and we sincerely promise that in future we shall hold them in the deepest respect, and obey their commands, as they are placed over us by Thee, and shall one day have to render an account of our souls. Grant, dear Lord, that we may so love and obey Thee and Thy ministers, that on the last day we may be rewarded by the enjoyment of the eternal happiness of Heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

Q. What is Matrimony?

A. A Sacrament which gives grace to the husband and wife to live happy together, and to bring up their children in the love and fear of God. *Matt. xix. 6.*

1. Matrimony is the conjugal and legitimate union of man and woman, which is to last during their lives, or an indissoluble union contracted by mutual consent, between one man and one woman, in a lawful manner, by which they are obliged to live together all the days of their life. Matrimony or marriage, as just explained, may be considered either as a *natural* contract, a *civil* contract, or a *sacrament* of the New Law. Matrimony as a natural contract, giving the married parties a right to each other, for propagating the human species, was instituted by God Himself. He is the author of this contract, and at the beginning of the world, created both the sexes, male and female, to be united for the purpose of bringing forth children. This natural contract took place between Adam and Eve, in the garden of Paradise, and had God's blessing upon it, as the only approved means for the lawful propagation of mankind. This we learn from the book of Genesis: "And the Lord God said, It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself. And then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam;

and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh"—*Gen. ii. 18-24.*

2. Marriage as a civil contract is that which is made according to the laws of the country where the parties dwell, having a reference to the temporal concerns of the married parties, as members of the community. Upon the multiplication of mankind on the earth, large societies of many families joined in one body, were formed for their mutual protection and defence, and for securing to individuals the undisturbed possession of their property. To effect this, good laws and regulations were required. And as nothing tends better to the good of society and to public peace, than a properly regulated marriage contract, laws were enacted by the different states with regard to the respective privileges of married people and their children. But the laws and regulations of the state, with regard to the contract of marriage, cannot of themselves constitute a true marriage, nor has the state any power for such a purpose.

3. Matrimony as a *Sacrament* was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself, on the establishment of Christianity, and as such we are now to consider it. The great end of the Christian religion is to lead men to Heaven; and as marriage is the natural source from which mankind is derived, it was necessary that such measures should be taken with respect to marriage among Christians, as to make it conducive to that great end of the Christian religion—the salvation of souls. For this reason, our Lord was pleased to

elevate the natural contract of marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament among Christians, so as to annex a particular grace to the lawful celebration of this contract, by which the "husband and wife" may "live happy together", by preserving a mutual love and fidelity to one another, and "bring up their children in the love and fear of God".

Q. Is Matrimony a true Sacrament of the New Law?

A. Yes; for it has the three things necessary to make it a Sacrament.

4. A Sacrament, as you have already been told, is "a visible, that is, an outward sign or action, instituted by Christ", for the purpose of "giving us grace". But in Matrimony we find these three things—"an outward sign", "an inward grace", and the "institution of Christ". There is, in the first place, "a visible or an outward sign", which is the mutual consent of the parties expressed by words or other signs, and the actual giving and taking of each other, under those conditions which the laws of God and His Church require. In the second place, there is the "inward grace" or inward part, performed by God, which is, first, an increase of sanctifying grace, and secondly, but principally, the sacramental grace proper to the marriage, by which the husband and wife are enabled to discharge the duties and obligations of their state in a proper manner. In the third place, there is the "institution of Christ", which we find in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew. We read in that chapter, that when the Pharisees put the question to our Saviour, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" Jesus Christ, in answer, told them, that marriage at the beginning was instituted by God Himself; and that though, *from the hardness of their hearts*, it had fallen off very

much in sanctity from what it had been, "from the beginning it had not been so". He then restored it to its primitive state, by saying: "Therefore, now, they are not two but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man separate"—*Matt. xix. 6.*

5. And St. Paul, repeating the same truth, adds: "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and the Church"—*Ephes. v. 32.* In these words the Apostle shows, that in the Church of Christ marriage is a great Sacrament, and that it is not only a sign of the union and love which are required among Christians in that state, but is also a sign of the union which subsists between Christ and His Church, which union consists in grace and charity; so that it follows, that there is grace and mutual charity conferred upon the husband and wife towards each other. That this is the true meaning of the words of St. Paul, is shown by the Holy Fathers who have interpreted this passage; and the Council of Trent has given it the same interpretation, when it says: "The grace which perfects that natural love, and confirms that indissoluble union, Christ Himself, the author and finisher of the sacraments, merited for us, by His passion; as the Apostle intimates, saying, 'Husbands, love your wives, as also Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it'; adding shortly after: 'This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and the Church'".

6. That Matrimony is a Sacrament has always been believed and taught by the Councils and Fathers of the Church. St. Irenæus, St. Cyril, St. Ambrose, St. Augustin, and many other Fathers, hold that Matrimony is one of the seven Sacraments. The last-mentioned Father says: "In the marriage of our women, the sanctity of the sacrament is more worthy than the fruitfulness of the womb"—*De Bo.*

Conj. The Council of Florence, held in the year 1438, expressly says that the seventh Sacrament is Matrimony; and the Council of Trent declares that Matrimony is a Sacrament, and that it gives grace to the worthy receiver; and it, moreover, strikes with its *anathema* any person who should dare advance that it is not truly and properly one of the seven Sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Christ our Lord.

Q. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

A. The effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony are the happiness of the parties married, and the bringing up of their children in a Christian manner.

7. The Sacrament of Matrimony "gives grace to the husband and wife to live happy together", by enabling them to love each other, to bear with each other's weakness, to live in harmony and peace, to condescend to the imperfections of each other, to bear each other's infirmities with mildness and patience, to be ready to forgive when they do anything against each other. The Sacrament of Matrimony has also another effect, and that is, it gives the married parties the grace to restrain the violence of concupiscence, to observe conjugal chastity, to be loyal and faithful to each other, and to enable them to support, with Christian courage, the difficulties and burdens of the married state. "To bring up their children in the love and fear of God", is another effect of the Sacrament of marriage; for by means of it they are enabled to give them a Christian and virtuous education, to implant in their young minds sentiments of piety and religion, to train them up in the practice of every virtue, and learn them, betimes, to walk "in the love and fear of God".

Q. Do they receive the grace of the Sacra-

ment of Matrimony who contract marriage in the state of mortal sin?

A. No; they are guilty of a very great sacrilege by profaning so great a Sacrament, and instead of a blessing, they receive their condemnation—*Eph. v. 32.*

8. Those “who contract marriage in the state of mortal sin”, receive not the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony; for Matrimony being a Sacrament of the *living*, does not confer sanctifying grace, but only an increase of sanctifying grace, and, therefore, supposes the soul to be already in the state of grace, which is incompatible with “mortal sin”. Whoever, therefore, “contracts marriage in the state of mortal sin”, receives not the grace of the Sacrament, for he approaches it without the necessary dispositions. Though Almighty God is always ready to bestow the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony, yet, if the receiver be indisposed, by contracting it “in the state of mortal sin”, the grace will not be given to him, though the outward form of the Sacrament be duly administered.

9. Those “who contract marriage in the state of mortal sin”, deprive themselves not only of the grace of the Sacrament, but also “are guilty of a very great sacrilege, and instead of a blessing they receive their condemnation”. They are guilty of a very great sacrilege; for they abuse, by their unworthy dispositions and criminal conduct, God’s goodness in instituting the Sacrament, and so far from receiving the benefits of it, intended by Almighty God, they convert it to their own destruction here and hereafter. They render their marriage an unhappy one; for by receiving it “in the state of mortal sin”, they bring down on their heads the vengeance of God,

and "instead of a blessing they receive their condemnation"; as their days shall be wretched and miserable; and instead of enjoying domestic peace, harmony, and love, discord and dissension shall reign among them, and embitter all their days.

Q. What should persons do to receive worthily the Sacrament of marriage?

A. They should make a good Confession, and earnestly beseech God to grant them a pure intention, and to direct them in the choice they are to make.

10. "To receive worthily the Sacrament of marriage", which is so necessary for the welfare and happiness of the married parties, they should, in the first place, "make a good Confession". If persons who are about to receive the Sacrament of marriage, feel their consciences burthened with mortal sin, Confession is absolutely necessary; for, as we have already seen, by receiving the Sacrament without being in the state of grace, we become guilty of a very great sacrilege. It may be said that perfect contrition is sufficient to justify the sinner, and obtain for him the grace of God. But how can we know whether or not we have that perfect contrition necessary to justify us? Besides, perfect contrition, in order to reconcile us with God, by obtaining His grace, should be accompanied with a wish or desire of going to Confession as soon as we can. But how can he be supposed to have the desire of going to Confession, who has, at that very time, every opportunity of confessing his sins? "A good Confession" is therefore necessary for those who are in the state of mortal sin, in order "to receive worthily the Sacrament of marriage", for it is the ordinary means established by Jesus Christ to obtain pardon of our

sins. Besides, we know from sad experience, that he who refuses to confess his sins before marriage, on the plea that he has perfect contrition, will not go to Confession even within that month, or the following one, nor, is it probable he will go at the following Easter time.

11. The parties about to be married should, in going to Confession, be very careful to make "a good Confession"; for, we regret to say, that a marriage Confession is but too often made in a negligent manner, so much so, that there is no Confession in one's whole life that is made with less spiritual profit. The Sacrament of Penance, on the occasion of marriage, is too often approached without preparation, and with a mind full of distractions, which has very little thought of God and salvation, but is intent upon the vanity and pomps of the world. How many are there who confess in haste, without examen, without contrition, without any serious thoughts of amending their lives, and on that account commit two sacrileges, one by a bad Confession, and another in receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony unworthily? How many are there, who being restored to the state of grace, relapse into sin before Matrimony, by immodest desires, and, perhaps, immodest actions? You need not, I am sure, be told, that such profanations bring down a secret curse upon such marriages—they bring down the vengeance of God, who is indignant at the commission of such sacrileges, at a time when His graces are most necessary. To avert these dire calamities, persons about entering the married state should take some time to reflect on the step they are to take—retiring, for that purpose, for an hour or two each day during the week before the Sacrament is to be received—examining their conscience, and praying to God that He may grant them true sorrow for their sins, and every grace to make a "good Confession".

12. Together with making "a good Confession", the parties about to be married should go to Holy Communion on the morning before, or the morning on which they are to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is true there is no obligation of communicating, as there is in making a good Confession before marriage, but the Church strongly recommends that holy practice, for there is nothing better calculated to draw down the blessings of Heaven on those who are preparing themselves for Matrimony, than receiving Holy Communion.

13. "To receive worthily the Sacrament of marriage", persons should also "earnestly beseech God to grant them a pure intention, and to direct them in the choice they are to make". As the state of marriage will be a curse rather than a blessing to those who marry without having "a pure intention", they should earnestly pray to God to grant them that "pure intention", which is so necessary for their future happiness and peace. The first thing, therefore, to be done by persons preparing for the marriage state, is to recommend the matter to God by prayer. They should, after the example of those who were married in Cana, take care to invite Jesus and Mary to their wedding, that is, they ought to put up their fervent prayers to Heaven, and beseech God to guide and direct their steps, and make known to them the way wherein they are to walk. They should beg the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and all the Saints, that their intention in receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony may be pure, and that their marriage may be for their temporal and eternal happiness.

14. "To direct them in the choice they are to make", should, too, be the fervent prayer to God of those who intend to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. When one begins to think of entering the

married state, and that there are proposals or advances made towards it, he should imitate the example of the Patriarch Isaac, of whom we read in Genesis, that when his father Abraham had sent his servant to make arrangements about his marriage with Rebecca, he went out into the field to pray. He did not think it enough that he had a prudent, wise, and virtuous father, who would take every care to choose good wife for him, but he also judged it necessary that he himself should apply to Almighty God, and by prayer and meditation, beg of Him that He would direct him in the choice he was to make.

15. As there is nothing more difficult than to know well the disposition and humour of any person, the Divine assistance is most particularly necessary, that one may not be deceived in the selection of his partner, when he is about to contract the Sacrament of Matrimony. For if persons find it necessary to pray to God on matters of ordinary importance, it is much more necessary to "earnestly beseech God to direct them in the choice they are to make", when they are about to enter a state of life which is unchangeable, such as marriage. Once married, they cannot undo what has been done. The knot being once tied, nothing but death can sever it. Therefore persons cannot be too cautious in their choice, when it is evident that both their happiness in this life, and their eternal happiness in the life to come, depend, in a great measure, upon that choice.

Q. What intentions ought a Christian have in marrying?

A. The intentions of Christians in getting married should be, mutual help, and the begetting and bringing up of children in the fear and love of God.

16. In getting married, persons should not have in view the gratification of ambition or avarice, and still less the gratification of carnal desires, for such views

as these can never be a means of procuring the blessings of Heaven. The intention should be such as Almighty God had in the institution of marriage. "It is not good", said God, when He instituted marriage, "for man to be alone; let Us make him a help like to himself", to assist him in the government of his family, in the management of his temporal matters, in the good education of his children, in all the labours and toils of life. Such, too, should be the intention of persons in getting married—mutual help, mutual sympathy in going through the world, and in bearing its cares, pains, and suffering, and mutual support in securing eternal happiness hereafter.

17. The second and principal intention which persons should have in view in getting married is, to have children, and when they have them, to bring them up in the love and fear of God, in order to increase the number of His faithful servants, and that they should become one day glorious Saints in Heaven. This is certainly a point of the greatest importance, and the neglect of attending to it carefully, is one great cause of unhappy marriages. When, therefore, a person is about to engage in the married state, he should lay aside all motives suggested by lust, and aim chiefly at God's honour and the saving of his soul. Seek not carnal pleasures in so holy an institution, but have the virtuous end which a Christian ought to propose to himself. The Angel Raphael has declared it in a word to young Tobias. "Thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather with the love of children than for lust". And such was the intention with which Tobias married, for he said: "You know, O Lord, that I marry not for self-gratification, or any such lustful views, but only for the sake of posterity, in which Thy name be blessed for ever and ever"—*Tob. viii. 9.*

18. It may, perhaps, be asked if it be unlawful to marry in consideration of riches, beauty, noble birth, or some other conveniences relating to the present life. But the answer is, that none of these things ought to be the only nor the chief intention in marriage; the chief end of marriage being to have children, if it be the will of God. But these motives are not to be condemned when they are only secondary reasons, for preferring one person who is possessed of them, to another who has them not.

19. To enter the married state as a remedy against incontinence, is also another intention that is laudable, for St. Paul says: "For fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband". Though he declares to the unmarried and to widows, "it is good for them if they so continue, even as I"; yet he immediately adds: "but if they do not contain themselves, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to be burned"—*I. Cor. vii. 9.* By these words the Apostle shows that marriage is also intended as a remedy for those who are free to choose, and have not the gift of continence; and that by means of it, scandal, which should be caused by incontinence, would be removed, and the ruin of their souls arrested. If, therefore, one who is not under any obligation of leading a single life, find that he has not received the gift of continence—which is a particular gift of God—and knowing his weakness, is afraid of himself, he may lawfully and laudably have recourse to marriage, to preserve himself from the danger of ruining his soul, to which the frailty of his nature might otherwise expose him.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

* On a mild and beautiful winter's day, at the very moment when the new moon was slowly rising over the mountains, there was seen a long procession of women, gorgeously attired, wending their way towards the dwelling of Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin. Having arrived at the door, they were introduced into an inner room, which the young and holy betrothed, together with some pious matronly relatives, occupied. The relatives returned thanks to God, who gave her a protector in the person of a husband, and then complimented her on the marriage, the festivities of which they had just come to partake of. Mary's wedding dress, as far as mere conjecture will allow of description, was similar to that worn by the Jewish virgins on festival days—namely, Tyrian purple. As a memorial of the primitive times, and the patriarchal manners of her ancestors, she wore, like Rebecca, golden earrings and bracelets, an humble and indispensable present which Joseph deemed it his duty to send some days before the ceremony. In place of the golden crown placed on the heads of those brides from among the opulent classes, there was placed on the flaxen and curled hair of the Queen of Virgins a simple garland of myrtle. A Sidonian veil, ornamented with embroidery of gold or silver, covered her from head to foot, and floated around her like a misty cloud. A canopy, covered with rich stuff, awaited the bride outside; it was carried by four young Israelites. Mary has on either hand two matrons—the one on the right representing St. Anne, and the other, perhaps, Mary of Cleophas, whose strong and courageous love led her up Calvary's hill. The nuptial *cortège*, waving, as a token of joy, myrtle and olive branches, marched on to the sound of harps, flutes, and timbrels, which measured the time. The bridegroom, Joseph, his forehead ornamented with a curious sort of crown, transparent as crystal, and peculiar to his native place, proceeded onward, surrounded by a number of friends, who manifested their joy on the occasion. The women of Israel, following the happy pair, cast olive branches at their feet; and from time to time the bride was obliged to arrest her steps, that her clothes might be sprinkled with rose water. Though the

noly union of Joseph and Mary presented nothing which could savour of the vain pleasures of the world, and the enjoyment of the age; though the chaste spouses were perfectly convinced of, and fully knew, the vanity and nothingness of all things here below, still they sacrificed to ancient usages, through respect for the time-honoured custom of their ancestors. Having arrived at the spot where the ceremony was to be performed, the friends of the bridegroom, and the companions of the bride, cried out with one voice: "*Blessed be he who comes!*" Joseph, covered by his mantle, and Mary by her veil, are seated, one by the side of the other, under the canopy. The bridegroom then puts a ring on the finger of the bride, saying: "Behold, you are my wife, according to the rite of Moses and Israel". He then removes his mantle, and places it over his wife, in imitation of what passed at the marriage of Ruth, who said to Booz: "*Spread thy coverlet over thy servant*". The whole party then gave thanks to the Lord.—*Orsini's Life of the Blessed Virgin, translated by the Rev. P. Power.*

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE GIVES GRACE TO THE HUSBAND
AND WIFE TO LIVE HAPPY TOGETHER.

† The inconstancy of man—for man is fickle in his friendship, is unstable in his love, is inconstant in his affections, subject to a thousand passing sensations—his soul laid open to appeals from every sense—to the ebb and flow of every pulse, and every sense of his for ever palpitating with a quick response, telling the eye to look with pleasure upon this object, as amusing; to the ear, telling it to drink in with pleasure such and such a sound of melody—and so on. Need I tell you, my friends, what your own heart has so often told you? How inconstant we are; how the thing that captivates us to-day we will look coldly upon to-morrow, and the next day, perhaps, with eyes of disgust? Need I tell you how fickle is that love, that friendship of the human heart, against which, and its inconstancy, the Holy Ghost seems to warn us? "Put not thy trust in Princes, nor in the children of men, in whom there is no salvation". To guard against this inconstancy it is necessary to call in divine grace and help from Heaven. For it is a question of conforming the heart of man in the steadiness, in the unchangeableness, and in the purity of the love that is to last all his life long. Therefore it is that the Catholic Church sanctifies the solemn contract by which man promises to his fellow-creature that he will love her;

that he will never allow that love for her to grow cold in his bosom; that he will never allow even a thought of any other love than hers to cross his pure imagination or his pure soul; that he will love her in the days of her old age as he loves her to-day, in the freshness of her beauty, as she stands by his side before the altar of God, and puts her virgin hand into his. And she swears to him a corresponding love. But, ah! who can assure to her that the heart which promises to be hers to-day—who can insure to her that the love, ever inconstant in its own nature, and acted upon by a thousand influences—is not calculated, first to deceive, then to alienate, then to destroy? How can she have the courage to believe that the word that passed from that man's lips, at that altar, shall never be regretted—never be repealed? I answer, the Catholic Church comes in and calls down a special sacramental grace from Heaven; lets in the very body of the Saviour, in its sacramental form, to touch those two hearts, and, by purifying them, to elevate their affection into something more than gross love of sense, and to shed upon those two hearts, thus united, the rays of divine grace, to tinge their lives somewhat with the light of ineffable love that binds the Lord to His Church. And so, in that sacrament of Matrimony, the Church provides a divine remedy for the inconstancy of the heart of man; and she also provides a sanctifying influence which, lying at the very fountain head, and source, and spring of our nature, sanctifies the whole stream of society that flows from the sacramental and sanctifying love of Christian marriage.

HOLY PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE.

‡ A young physician, who resided in Paris, made proposals for a young lady of that city, and was promised her hand in marriage. A short period before the time appointed for the intended ceremony, he called at her house, and on seeing her mother, told her that he desired an interview with the lady destined to be his future wife. On being questioned as to its object, he frankly replied, that he had been trained from childhood, as the family were aware, in the practice of his religious duties, and that he was desirous that he and the young lady should each make a general Confession, and approach the Holy Communion, previous to the intended marriage, that they might receive, with the nuptial blessing, the graces which are attached to it. The mother, overjoyed at this pious determination, addressed him in the most affectionate terms,

— and congratulated herself and daughter on the dispositions which the young gentleman manifested, and on the happiness of which it could not fail to be productive. The young gentleman did not confine himself to this. He had the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered for eight successive days previous to the marriage; and, on the morning of the appointed day nothing could be more affecting than to see this young couple approach the holy table, the one accompanied by his father and mother, the other by her mother and grandmother; when all received the Holy Communion from the hands of the Priest who was afterwards to bless their marriage. What an instructive example for young persons! What a lesson for so many negligent and disedifying parents! If all marriages were celebrated like this, they would be followed, without doubt, by tranquillity and happiness.—*Duties of a Christian.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is meant by marriage, and by marriage as a natural contract?
2. What do you understand by marriage as a civil contract?
3. For what reason did our Lord elevate marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament?
4. How do you show that Matrimony is a true Sacrament of the New Law?
5. Can you show, from the words of St. Paul, that Matrimony is a Sacrament?
6. Have the Councils and Holy Fathers declared Matrimony to be a Sacrament?
7. What effects are produced by the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony?
8. Why is the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony not granted to those in mortal sin?
9. What are the evils of contracting marriage in the state of mortal sin?
10. Why is Confession necessary before marriage?
11. Are marriage Confessions ever made without the proper dispositions?

12. Should Holy Communion be received by persons about to get married?

13. Should those about being married pray to God for purity of intention?

14. Should we follow the example of Isaac when about to get married?

15. Why is it most necessary that one should pray to God for His direction when about to get married?

16. What, in the first place, should be the intention of those who are about marrying?

17. What is the principal intention one should have in getting married?

18. Is it lawful to marry that we may obtain riches and dignities?

19. Is it lawful to marry that we may avoid incontinence?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever entertain the greatest respect and reverence for the holy Sacrament of Matrimony as being instituted by Jesus Christ.

2. Consult God by prayer on a matter of such great importance as that of embracing the married state.

3. When about receiving the Sacrament of marriage, let your intention be pure and unsullied.

PRAYER.

O Jesus! we have now been taught the nature and importance of the seventh Sacrament, that of Matrimony, and its institution by Thee. We shall ever respect what Thou hast sanctified. Grant, dear Lord, that all those who are about to enter that holy state may so prepare themselves by prayer and a good Confession, that they may receive the grace of the Sacrament, peace here, and eternal peace hereafter.
Amen.

CHAPTER XL.

ON THE BANNS AND IMPEDIMENTS OF MARRIAGE.

Q. Should children consult their parents on their intended marriages ?

A. Yes ; and be advised by them according to reason and religion. They should also give timely notice to their pastor.

1. Children should always “consult their parents on their intended marriages”, as they are matters of the greatest importance and interest, both to the children and to the parents. Regularly speaking, they are bound, under pain of grievous sin, to consult them on their choice, and not to dispose of themselves without their previous knowledge : “My son”, says the wise man, “do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done”—*Ecclus.* xxxii. 24. The respect and obedience which children owe their parents by the law of nature and by the law of God, require of them that in matters which involve the future happiness of both, nothing should be done by children without consulting their parents. From experience we well know, that marriages made against the will of the parents, prove generally unfortunate. The disturbance that we witness in families, the jars and dissensions between husbands and wives, the bad education of children, are commonly the fatal consequences of marriages entered into without the consent of parents.

2. They who are about to engage in a married life,

are to have a regard to the will and directions of their parents, "and be advised by them according to reason and religion". St. Ambrose tells us that Christian modesty cannot suffer that children marry without advice, and that they should submit to the judgment of their parents. Among the people of God in the Old Law, the parents had the marriage of their children almost exclusively in their own hands; and when Almighty God speaks to His people on the subject, He addresses Himself to the parents only: "Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son", He says in the Book of Deuteronomy, "nor take his daughter for thy son"—*Deut. vii. 3.* And on this account we find that the patriarchs and servants of God, as Isaac and Jacob and Sampson, married not without "being advised according to reason and religion" by their parents, and having their full concurrence and consent.

3. It is true, I must not deny, that there may be some exceptions to this, as when parents are certainly unreasonable, and when it is evident they are biassed by some private interest or ends; so that, in hindering or promoting the marriage of their children, they give them advice which is by no means calculated to make them happy. But if any such thing should happen, as it may sometimes, children at least ought to consult, and follow the counsel and advice of such discreet persons as they can confide in, for they ought to be careful, in a concern of so great importance, not to be led by their own passions, inclinations, and fancies. But when parents, merely through hard-heartedness, or avarice, or humour, refuse their consent to the reasonable marriage of their children, in such cases, after having consulted disinterested, enlightened, and virtuous guides, and having received the approbation of the Church, the children are not obliged to obey such parents; and without their consent the marriage can take place.

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4. Persons about to be married "should also give timely notice to their pastor". This "timely notice" is most necessary, for experience shows that many very many, evil consequences result from marriages performed in haste, and entered into without previous inquiries with regard to the state and condition of the parties married. The necessity of this "timely notice" the Church has always recognised and admitted by the injunctions she has laid on her Ministers, of not admitting to the Sacrament of Matrimony any persons, without having previously made a searching inquiry as to their state, and the circumstances connected with them. To guard against many inconveniences and evil results that flow from marriages contracted without previous inquiry about the parties, she has also obliged her Pastors to publish the *banns* before the marriage takes place.

Q. What is meant by the proclamation of *banns*?

A. The proclamation of the *banns* is the publication by the Pastor from the altar during Mass, on three successive Sundays or Holidays, of an intended marriage.

5. *Banns* is a German word, and has the same signification as *proclamation*. Proclaiming or publishing the *banns* is commanded in order to prevent clandestine marriages, which the Church has always detested on account of the fatal consequences flowing from them—to discover if there be any lawful impediment to marriage—to know if any of the parties be otherwise engaged by promise, or from any other cause—and to afford parents, and all others interested in opposing the marriage, an opportunity of interposing, and making objections, if they have any. The Council of Trent, in the twenty-fourth session, decreed that, in consequence of the evils resulting from clandestine or private marriages, the publication of

banns should be made on three successive Sundays or Holidays, by the Parish Priests of the parties.

6. No marriage can take place until the *banns* have been published, because the Church of Christ strictly commands it, and has published this command in two of her General Councils: first, in the great Council of Lateran, held in the year 1215, where the proclamations of marriages are commanded in general terms; and again, in the Council of Trent, where the particular circumstances to be observed in making these proclamations are expressly determined. And the reasons for making these proclamations are so strong, and the consequences of neglecting them so fatal, that even the civil laws themselves of almost all Christian states expressly enjoin them.

Q. In what way are the *banns* to be published?

A. In the manner required by the Council of Trent.

7. The circumstances required by the Council of Trent in proclaiming the *banns* are, that they be made on three different Sundays or Holidays; that they be made public during divine service, when all the people are present, so that it will not suffice to make them at any other time. When the parties belong to different parishes, the proclamations are to be made in both the parishes, by the proper Pastor of each party. A particular caution is to be used with those who travel about from place to place, and have no settled habitation; and no Priest is allowed to marry them till the most diligent inquiry be made, lest they should have wives or husbands in other places, which is too often the case with such people. And certainly all those who know of any lawful impediment are obliged to make it known, both because the Church expressly commands them, and calls

upon them in a public and solemn manner to do so ; and also, because if they do not, they become answerable to God for all the fatal consequences of their silence.

Q. Can the publishing of the *banns* be dispensed with?

A. Yes ; it can for good reasons.

8. The Council of Trent, considering that there may be cases wherein it may be necessary to dispense with some or all of the proclamations, gives power to *Bishops only* to grant such dispensation, when they shall see a just and necessary cause for doing so ; particularly if there be danger that malicious people would oppose the marriage and create disturbance, without having any just cause for doing it, as the Council itself expressly observes ; and also when any great spiritual, or even temporal, good of the parties requires it. This dispensation is usually called a *license*, and unless the *banns* have been published by the Parish Priest, it is a mortal sin to marry without this license.

Q. What is meant by the impediments of marriage?

A. An impediment of marriage is that which prevents marriage from being contracted validly or lawfully.

9. As marriage is of such great importance for the good of individuals, for the peace and well-being of society, and for the education of children, the holy Church, from the earliest ages, annexed certain conditions to the matrimonial contract, without which, either the marriage is rendered null and void, or those who contract it are highly criminal, and commit a mortal sin. These conditions are, that there should be no impediments either annulling or prohibiting the marriage, which impediments she specifies in her Decrees relating to the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Q. How many kinds of impediments are there?

A. There are two kinds of impediments—impediments annulling and impediments prohibiting.

10. The annulling impediments render the marriage null and void; so that the parties in whom they are found, are incapable of contracting marriage. A marriage contracted notwithstanding an impediment of this kind, is null and void from the beginning: that is to say, no marriage at all in the sight of God. No law of the land can make such an alliance good. Both parties to it live together in crime and under the anger of God, if they are aware of the impediment; and if they did not know of it in the beginning, they are bound to separate immediately when they discover it. Sometimes, indeed, the impediment may be dispensed with by the Church; but in that case they are bound to abstain from all use of marriage until the dispensation is obtained, and a valid marriage contracted.

11. The principal impediments of this kind are:—Consanguinity, affinity, public honesty, crime, difference of religion, vows, clandestinity, the bond of a previous marriage. 1. “Consanguinity” is that impediment which exists between blood-relations, to the fourth degree inclusively. In other words, marriage is forbidden between third cousins, or any nearer degree of kindred. And this impediment exists when the relationship arises from an illegitimate birth. 2. “Affinity” is relationship by marriage. It is forbidden to marry the third cousin, or any nearer blood relation of one’s former husband or wife. The same is true of a person, and the blood-relations of any one with whom that person has had unlawful connexion; but in this case the impediment extends only to the second degree—first cousin. Spiritual affinity is a species of relationship contracted by

means of the Sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation. For this reason parents cannot marry with the sponsors of their child, or with any person who baptized it; nor can sponsors marry with their god-children. So if one baptizes the child of another, even although it were a case of necessity, he cannot marry either with the child or its parent.

12.—3. "Public honesty" is an impediment which forbids one to marry with a parent, a child, a brother or sister of the person to whom one has been validly engaged by a promise of marriage. Also, if one has contracted an invalid marriage—or a valid marriage, which, however, was never consummated—it is forbidden, in such case, to marry with the blood relations of the other party, as far as the fourth degree; that is to say, with a third cousin, or any nearer blood relation. 4. "Crime" is also an impediment. Persons who are guilty of adultery, with a mutual promise of marriage, in case the innocent party should die, are rendered incapable of contracting marriage together. Two persons who are guilty of the homicide of one of the married parties, and of adultery, with the view to marriage, cannot marry one another. It is with great reason that persons who are guilty of these crimes should be rendered incapable of ever contracting marriage together, as such incapacity prevents numbers of crimes which otherwise might follow. 5. "Difference of religion" is an impediment between a baptized person and one who was never baptized. 6. "Vows" is an impediment, that is, a solemn vow of chastity, taken by becoming a religious in an approved religious order. Persons taking this vow cannot marry; nor can any person marry who has taken Holy Orders.*

13.—7. "Clandestine marriages", that is, those

* See Mission Prayer Book.

which are contracted without the presence of the Parish Priest and two witnesses, are made null and void by the Council of Trent. In Ireland, therefore, and in every other country where this Decree of the Council of Trent has been published, these marriages between two Catholics are not only unlawful, but invalid. They are not marriages at all, unless celebrated before the Parish Priest of one or other of the parties, and at least two witnesses. The presence of any other Priest, however good and virtuous, unless he have the consent and authority of the Parish Priest or the Bishop, is not sufficient. But in England, in Scotland, and in the United States of America, where this Decree of the Council of Trent has not been published, these clandestine marriages, although sinful, are valid.*

14. It is a most wicked and detestable thing, that Catholics should ever so far forget all the dictates of faith and piety, as to be united like heathens before a civil magistrate, and even sometimes before a heretical preacher, in contempt of the Church of God and of the sanctity of this Sacrament. Besides the sin, there are other evils which result from these clandestine unions. Commonly, no safe record is kept of the date and of the names of the parties; and when proof of the marriage is required, sufficient proof is not to be found. Thus, wives or husbands may be deserted with impunity, title to property cannot be proved, children are often unable to show their legitimacy. How many young and thoughtless persons engage themselves rashly and suddenly in a state of misery, from which death only can release them! Unhappy females are ensnared by men already married, into secret or hasty unions, which, if not soon ended in shame, are con-

* See Chapter vi., on Clandestine Marriages.

tinued in more lasting sorrow, and more horrible guilt. Those who violate the salutary laws of the Church, will find, sooner or later, that "the way of transgressors is hard".

15. "The bond of a previous marriage" is an impediment which death alone can remove. The Catholic Church holds that, by the institution and ordinance of Almighty God, marriage is indissoluble. No power on earth, no prince, no judge, no legislature, can break the bond which unites husband and wife. For certain just causes, especially for adultery, they may live separately, but they are still married, and cannot marry again. If, after such a separation, or after a divorce granted by the law of the land, either party should marry another person, it would be no true marriage before God, but an adulterous alliance.

A. How many are the principal impediments which render marriage unlawful?

A. The prohibitory impediments which render marriage unlawful are principally four.

16. Prohibitory impediments are those which do not annul the marriage, nor hinder it from being a true and valid marriage, but make it a very great crime in those who contract marriage with these impediments. The chief impediments of this kind are these: 1. When a person is under a mutual promise of marriage to one: in this case it would be unlawful in him, and a great sin, to marry another, because it would be manifest injury done to the person to whom he was under promise of marriage. 2. When a person binds himself to God by a simple, private vow of chastity, it would be a manifest crime in him to marry, being a breach of the promise made to God. 3. If one should marry publicly in Advent or Lent, when the Church, for most just reasons, for-

bids the *solemnizing* of marriage, it would be a grievous sin of disobedience to her commands, a prostitution of these holy times set apart for penance and humiliation, and an occasion of great scandal. 4. If a Catholic should marry a Heretic or a person excommunicated by the Church. This prohibition is founded on reasons of the greatest importance, and of which we shall speak in the next question.

Q. Are mixed marriages strictly prohibited by the Church?

A. Yes; and such marriages have been declared detestable and unholy unions.

17. Mixed marriages are the union of Catholics with Heretics and persons excommunicated by the Church, and are called mixed on account of the difference of religion between the parties. These marriages are unlawful, and are prohibited in the strongest terms by the canons of the Church, by a great many Councils, and by the Sovereign Pontiffs; for they have ever been the fruitful source of public scandal and private misery. Reprobated by the natural and divine law, the Catholic Church has not only discouraged, but condemned them. She has declared them to be impious and sinful, and through the mouth of one of her venerable pontiffs, expressed her "abhorrence" of those unnatural unions. She has condemned them not only on account of dangers to the faith of the offspring, but also from a well-grounded apprehension, that where there is a difference of opinion on a matter so awful and so intimately interwoven with all the relations of life, as religion, there cannot be expected that cordial union, that conjugal affection, upon the existence and integrity of which the temporal and eternal interests of married parties so much depend.

18. In the first place, the greatest danger arises to the Catholic party from a mixed marriage—a danger no less than his or her salvation. This is clear from the word of God Himself; for when He introduced His people into the Holy Land, He strictly enjoined them never to marry with the people of the country, who were of a false religion, otherwise they would certainly be seduced by them, and ruin their souls: “Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son; for she will take away thy son from following Me”—*Deut.* vii. In this text, God absolutely affirms that not only is there danger of being seduced from the true religion, but that the seduction will actually take place: “For she will turn away thy son from following Me”. And, in fact we find that this was actually the case; for, after the death of Josue, as we are told in the third chapter of the Book of Judges, the children of Israel, by intermarrying with the Chanaanites, became perverts from the true religion, and forgot their God, which was the source of dire calamities to the whole nation. In the third Book of Kings, we read that God laid the same strong injunctions on the children of Israel not to intermarry with those of a false religion, because they would most certainly turn away their hearts to follow strange gods.*

19. After such express declarations of Almighty God, and such striking examples, who shall dare to trust himself, or expose himself to such dangers? And does not daily experience, in numberless instances, confirm the truth of all this? All the strong injunctions laid upon Christians in the New Testament, to avoid all dangerous communications with those of a false religion, import the same obligation of not entering into marriage with them. “Bear not the yoke with unbelievers”, says the Apostle

Paul to the Corinthians : “ What fellowship hath light with darkness ? or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever ? ” Although, in certain circumstances, the Church finds it necessary to overlook such connexions, to prevent greater evils, yet she has always declared her entire disapprobation of them, well knowing the fatal seduction that too often flows from them, from experience itself. The same experience also shows, that, even where there is not an entire seduction by such marriages, yet they seldom fail to occasion in those who contract them, a coldness towards their religion, a neglect of the duties of a good Christian, a weakening of their faith, and other such fatal effects, which are most hurtful and pernicious to the soul.

20. From *mixed* marriages arise, in the second place, domestic broils, dissensions, and unhappiness ; for when the parties are of a different religion, the one a Catholic, and the other a Protestant, what a source of dissension and disturbance does this unholy union become ? How often do they contend about the faith of children ? How often are calumnies and slanders thrown out by the Protestant party against the Catholic religion ? How many gibes and sneers against the true Religion, its Ministers, practices, and sacred ceremonies, is the Catholic party often obliged to listen to and patiently endure ? “ How”, says St. Ambrose, “ can there be a sincere union of the affections, when persons are divided on religion ? ” What difficulty does the Catholic find in observing the rules and practices of his religion !

21. And though nothing of all this should happen, what heartfelt affliction it must be to the Catholic, if he has true faith and a fear of eternity, to see the person whom, by the laws of God and nature, he is bound to love above any other creature, living in a way so dangerous, and so ruinous to the eternal hap-

piness of her soul? And then if, in addition to all this, he sees his dear children brought up in the same way of error and falsehood, and is quite powerless to prevent it! There are many other bitter trials attending mixed marriages, of which the parties themselves have woful experience, but of which, perhaps, the world never hears.†

22. In the third place, from *mixed* marriages arises the danger of salvation to the children born from that unholy union. When one of the parents professes a false religion, what is to become of the children? How are they to be brought up in the true religion of Jesus Christ? Sometimes indeed the zeal and fervour of the Catholic parent do a great deal in this matter; but how often do we find from experience that quite the contrary happens? And if the Catholic parent die when the children are young, every hope of their being brought up in the Catholic religion is destroyed. And, if this should not be the case, yet what is to be expected from children, who hear one thing from one parent, and the contrary from the other? who see what the one approves, the other condemns? what the one reverences, the other ridicules? What is to be expected in such circumstances, but that the poor children should become cold and indifferent about all religious exercises; or at best, like those unhappy Israelites who halted between the Lord and Baal, halt all their days between the Church of Christ and Heresy; and at last, encouraged by worldly motives, either give up the former entirely, or dying in that unhappy state of doubt, fall under the condemnation of those of whom our Saviour says: "He that is not with Me, is against Me"—*Luke, xi. 23*. What was the cause of that deluge of wickedness which provoked Almighty God to destroy the whole world by the deluge of waters, but because the sons of God—the genera-

tion of the just—married the daughters of men, that is, of wicked men; and their children following the ways of their mothers, the whole world was corrupted? ‡

Q. Does the Church ever dispense in her law with regard to mixed marriages?

A. Yes; the Church sometimes grants a dispensation in her laws, and then such marriages become lawful.

23. Though *mixed* marriages be strictly prohibited by the Church, yet when there is a well-grounded hope that there exists no danger of perversion to the Catholic party, and when also there are grave reasons for contracting a marriage with a Protestant, or a person of any other sect, the Church grants a dispensation in the law which prohibits *mixed* marriages. But the Holy See does not grant the necessary dispensation unless upon the following conditions:—1. There must be a solemn promise made by both parties who are about to be married, that *all* the children shall be brought up in the religion of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. 2. That the Catholic husband or wife shall enjoy a perfect liberty in the exercise of the Catholic religion, and shall never be forced into a church or chapel to be present at heretical worship, or listen to the sermons of heretical ministers. 3. Besides the foregoing conditions, the Catholic party must promise to endeavour, by prayer, good example, and other prudent means, to effect the conversion of the other.

24. When a dispensation has been obtained from the Pope on these conditions, the marriage may take place without sin; but still it must not be supposed that such objectionable unions are approved of by the Church. She, indeed, permits them, but only with reluctance and sorrow; and on that account she will not allow the banns to be published, nor the marriage

to be celebrated, within the Church. Neither does she allow her Ministers to accord to the parties the holy rite of nuptial benediction.* For with what consistency could the Church *bless* that which she declares to be impious? Nor does she allow any sacred ceremony to be performed, nor any sacred vestment to be worn, by the Priest, whilst the parties are repeating the words of the marriage contract.†

25. For many years a great many serious difficulties had arisen in Rhenish Prussia on the subject of mixed marriages. The Holy See, in its wisdom, eventually decreed, that in those dioceses where the Council of Trent had been published, and where the Protestant religion is established by law, a mixed marriage, if contracted before a Protestant minister or a civil magistrate who may testify to the validity of the contract, should be considered a valid marriage. In making that concession, the Pope by no means recognised the Protestant minister as invested with any religious character or authority, but dispensed merely with regard to such marriages in the law of clandestinity.§

* *An casu Matrimonii mixti coram sacerdote Catholico, sacerdos debet etiam omittere verba! Ego conjungo vos? Resp. parochus assistens matrimonio mixtæ religionis se abtineat.* (Decision of the Tribunal of the Holy Office, dated November 25, 1835.)

† *Meminerint sacerdotes pluribus SS. pontificum decretis vetari, ne ullus sacer ritus fiat, vel vestis sacra adhibeatur dum fœdera nuptiarum hujusmodi ineuntur quæ neque intra ecclesiam sunt inuenda.* (Decree of the Provincial Council of Baltimore, held in the year 1840, and approved by the Holy See.)

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

HATRED OF HERESY.

* The oldfashioned hatred of Heresy is becoming scarce. God is not habitually looked at as the sole truth ; and so the existence of heresies no longer appals the mind. It is assumed that God must do nothing painful, and His dominion must not allow itself to take the shape of an inconvenience or a trammel to the liberty of His creatures. It requires courage, both moral and mental, to believe the whole of a grand nation in the wrong, or to think that an entire century can go astray. The belief in the facility of salvation outside the Church is very agreeable to our domestic loves and to our private friendships. Moreover, if we will hold this, the world will pardon a whole host of other superstitions in us, and will do us the honour of complimenting the religion God gave, as if it were some literary or philosophical production of our own.

It would be strange, if divine truths were not sometimes harsh to a world lost in corruption and sin. Yet we have not the bravery to hold fast to our principles. We should think Priest, and Sacrament, and Church-membership of the last consequence to ourselves, if we were dying. But we regard them of too little consequence to our neighbour, to justify a candour which might savour of unpoliteness, or a sincerity which may be unpopular. Or is it, that we really do not care whether he be saved or not? However, our want of hatred of heresy first lowers our doctrines, and then our standard of practice. Hence it is, that, with the spirit of inward repentance, a love of the Church grows also ; and that, where there is cordial hatred of sin, cordial hatred of heresy is not far off. All these are antiquated notions : yet I keep running into them unconsciously. I believe we should be more really and validly repentant, if we had a trifle more of the spirit of the old inquisitors about us. I know I ought to be ashamed of this in the meridian splendour of the nineteenth century : but it is a weakness which I cannot overcome, perhaps because I have not made sufficiently earnest efforts to overcome it. Up to this time I continue to hold, that hatred of heresy will go along with genuine inward repentance. I beg of God, in His infinite compassion, to keep alive in me to the last hour of my life the intense hatred of heresy, with which He has inspired me, and which I recog-

nize as His gift. I beg of Him to make it grow in me to an abhorrence far greater than it is yet. Heaven is the land of love; but the hatred of heresy will not diminish there; for the hatred of heresy is the adoring love of God's ever-Blessed truth.—*Father Faber.*

THE PROTESTANT HUSBAND.

† It was a bright sunshiny morning, when a marriage was performed between a Catholic young woman and a Protestant young man, but dark clouds were seen not very far off. The Protestant young man behaved pretty well to her for a few months. It is true he quarrelled with her sometimes, he forgot his promises, and beat her because she wanted to go to the Catholic Chapel on Sundays. He sometimes threw her Prayer-book into the fire, and spoke against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. She was silent and patient; she knew that it was a just punishment from God for marrying a Protestant. That marriage had been made, and it was too late to unmake it. At last the dark cloud came. The Protestant young man came home one day to dinner. He sat down to the table and began to eat. The meat was not to his liking. There was a sulky anger on his face. He was silent for a few moments. At length he stood up on his feet, holding the knife clenched in his hand, fury and rage flashing from his eyes. He cursed his wife, and said: "You Popish beast, I will stick you with this knife, and take every drop of Popish blood out of you". The wife turned deadly pale; she fell off the chair; her senses were gone with the fright. She recovered them again, but it was only to live for a day or two. She died of the shock which the fright had given her!—*Father Furniss.*

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

† The next great moral influence of Society which requires the Church's action, is Education. "The child", as you know, "is father to the man"; and what the child is to-day, the man will be in twenty or thirty years time. Now, the young soul of the child is like the earth in the growing season. It is the time of sowing and of planting. Whatever is put into that young heart in the early days of childhood, will bring up, in the summer of manhood, and in the autumn of old age, its crop either of good or of evil. And, therefore, it is the most important time of life. The well-being of the world depends upon the sanctity of education. Now, in order that

education may be bad, it is not necessary, my friends, to teach the child anything bad. In order to make education bad, it is quite enough to neglect the element of sanctity and of religion. It is quite enough to neglect the religious portion of the education. By that very defect, the education becomes bad. And why? Because such is our nature, such the infirmity of our fallen state—such is the atmosphere of the scenes in which we live in this world—such the power of the infernal agencies that are busily at work for our destruction, that, educate the child as carefully as you may, surround him with the holiest influences, fill him with the choicest graces, you still run great risks that, some day or other, the serpent of sin will gain an entrance into that young soul in spite of you. How much more if that young heart be not replenished with divine grace! How much more if that young soul be not fenced round by a thousand appliances and a thousand defences against its enemies! And thus do we see that the principle of bad education is established the moment the strong religious element is removed. Now, the element of sanctity in the family, even when the husband is a good man—even when he is a sacrament-going man, as every Catholic man ought to be—yet the element of sanctity in the family, and for the family, lies with the woman. It is the duty of the mother. She has the children under her eye and under her care the livelong day. She has the formation of them, of their character, their first sentiments, thoughts, and works, either for good or evil. The seed to be planted—the formation of the soul—is in the mother's hand; and therefore it is that the character of the child mainly depends on the formation which the mother gives it. The father is engaged in his office, in keeping his business, or at his work all the day long. His example, whether for good or bad, is not before the eyes, the observant eyes of the child, as is the example of the mother. And so it is, my friends, that all depends upon the mother; and it is of vital importance that that mother should blend in herself all that is pure, holy, tender, and loving, and that she be assured of the sanctity of her position, of which the Church assures her by the indissoluble nature of the marriage tie.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE AND MIXED MARRIAGES.

§ Clement Augustus, Archbishop of Cologne, endured much suffering for his unceasing opposition to mixed marriages. The King of Prussia peremptorily commanded him to bless

the marriages of Catholics and Protestants; but he firmly declined to do that which his conscience taught him to look upon with horror. One night his enemy, the King, had the Archbishop's palace surrounded by troops, and in the dead of night, the aged and suffering prelate was torn from his bed, and hurried off to the fortress of Minden, where, for a long time, he was kept in the most rigorous captivity. He was approaching his sixty-fifth year when all this occurred. Eight years more of trial and glory were destined to complete his triumph. During that period the King of Prussia passed to his great account, and Clement Augustus soon followed him. The one has gone down to his grave with all the infamy which so justly attaches to a religious persecutor, whilst the unmerited sufferings and unshaken fortitude of the Archbishop have excited the sympathy and admiration of Europe. His history is now blended with that of the Church of the nineteenth century. He will take his place amongst the most illustrious defenders of her liberties against the unjust aggressions of the civil power; and posterity will one day rank him with a Pius VII. and a St. Thomas of Canterbury.—*The Catholic Offering.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why should children consult their parents on their intended marriages?
2. Was the consent of parents, in the Old Law, required for the marriage of children?
3. Should parents consent to the reasonable marriages of their children?
4. Should timely notice be given to Pastors of intended marriages?
5. Why are the *banns* of marriage proclaimed?
6. Can parties be married before the banns be published?
7. When and where are the banns to be published?
8. Can the publication of the banns be ever dispensed with?
9. What do you mean by the impediments of marriage?
10. What do you mean by annulling impediments?
11. What do you understand by consanguinity and affinity?
12. What is meant by the impediments of public honesty, crime, difference of religion, and of vow?

13. What do you mean by the impediment of clandestinity?
14. What is to be said of those who get married by a heretical minister?
15. What is meant by the impediment of the bond of a previous marriage?
16. Enumerate the four prohibitory impediments.
17. Are mixed marriages prohibited by the Church?
18. Can you prove from Scripture that mixed marriages are dangerous to the faith of the Catholic party?
19. Does experience convince us of the danger of mixed marriages?
20. Are mixed marriages the source of domestic broils?
21. Is it a source of sorrow to have the partner of one's life professing a false religion?
22. Are mixed marriages a source of danger to the faith of the offspring of such marriages?
23. Does the Church ever dispense in the law regarding mixed marriages?
24. In what way does the Church manifest her disapproval of mixed marriages?
25. Has the Church pronounced a mixed marriage to be valid?

PRACTICE.

1. Consult your parents before you enter on a state of life so important as that of marriage.
2. Embrace not the state of marriage without previous deliberation on the choice you are about to make.
3. Let no motive of interest or affection induce you to contract marriage with one who differs from you in religion.

PRAYER.

O God! we are now made aware of the duties and responsibilities of the marriage state. We have now been taught the necessity of preparation before we take a step of such vital importance to us. The dangers of rash and hasty unions we now know are productive of the worst consequences; and to guard against such evils, we shall not enter into that holy state without having previously implored Thy all-powerful aid and consulted our parents. Amen.

CHAPTER XLI.

ON THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE.

Q. What is the reason so many marriages prove unhappy ?

A. Because many enter into that holy state from unworthy motives, and with guilty consciences ; and therefore their marriages are not blessed by God.

1. The reason why so many marriages prove unhappy is, in the first place, "because many enter into that holy state from unworthy motives". There are, indeed, but too many who enter the marriage state, actuated by no higher motives than covetousness, sensuality, and the gratification of their passions, without the least thought for the welfare of their souls. Marriages contracted from "unworthy motives" of that nature, become a source of the greatest unhappiness through life, and instead of conferring a blessing, they bring down a curse. Such persons engage in this holy state, promising themselves, perhaps, gold and silver in abundance, a happy life for evermore, pleasure to be enjoyed without restraint ; but such "unworthy motives" soon meet their own punishment in the very state itself from which so much is expected ; for, having connected it with a sort of money-market, or place of sensual delights, they soon experience bitter disappointment, and their lives become an uninterrupted series of dissensions, animosities, and mutual dislikes. It is

particularly true of such persons, that they shall have what St. Paul says, "the tribulation of the flesh"—they shall have neither peace of mind nor quietness in their families; continual crosses, tribulations, and miseries will be their inheritance. They consult no other guide but their blind passions, and seem to look upon Matrimony, not as a state of sanctity, but as a state in which they can satisfy their brutish appetites, and indulge their animal propensities.

2. A fearful example of God's judgment is related in the book of Tobias, in reference to "unworthy motives" in contracting marriage. We there read that Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, was married successively to seven husbands, and each one of them, the first night of his marriage, died. Notwithstanding this, the Angel who accompanied young Tobias, in the shape of a man, and conducted him to the house of Raguel, advised him to marry this same woman. Young Tobias replied: "I have heard", says he, "that this young woman had been married to seven husbands, and every one of them had been found dead the first night of their marriage, and killed by the devil". "It is true", says the Angel, "and I will show you why this happened, and who they are, over whom the devil has had such power: they are men who marry in such a manner that God is far from their minds; they follow the suggestions of their lusts and their passions, like horse and mule; who have no understanding; and over such the devil has power. But for your part", says the Angel, "when you marry, you shall take your wife in the fear of God, with a desire of children, and not through lust and passion"—*Tobias*, vi. 14-18. He did so, and was happy in his marriage. Those seven before him, who had married to satisfy their lust and irregular inclinations, were by God's permission, killed by the devil; but as to Tobias, who married with the

fear of God, and with a good intention, the devil had no power over him.

3. Let these words be deeply imprinted in your mind, and know that if the devil does not destroy those immediately who defile the sanctity of marriage, he, through the permission of God, afflicts them with many other serious evils; and they who desire to escape them, should avoid the cause, and have nothing but a chaste love in their hearts. How can persons expect a blessing from God, when they enter into a new state of life not in His name, but rather in the name of Satan? How can they hope to receive the special graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony—which are given to those who worthily receive it, in order to make them happy both in this world and in the next—when they sacrilegiously abuse the sacrament, looking upon it as a mere temporal affair, a simple matter of business, an object of traffic, and but too often in a worse light; and enter it through motives of avarice, worldly interest, and, alas! motives of brutality and lust?

4. Besides “unworthy motives” in contracting marriages, there is another reason why so many marriages prove unhappy, and that is, because many enter into that holy state from “guilty consciences; and therefore these marriages are not blessed by God”. They “enter into that holy state” with their consciences burthened with the sins of perhaps many years. For these sins they feel not the least sorrow or shame, but continue in the actual commission of them, even to the day of their marriage. They make no Confession, they offer up to God not a single prayer, they follow no direction, nor observe any rule which religion precribes on so important an occasion as that of receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony; they approach the Sacrament almost reeking with crime and debauchery, knowing little of its

nature and importance, and unite themselves in the close bonds of marriage with guilty hearts and brutal dispositions.

5. Entering into that holy state with such "guilty consciences", they receive no grace, no aid from God; and so, deprived of the grace of the Sacrament, marriage entails on them in after life broils, scandals, jealousies, animosities, hatreds, dissensions, which render the married state a kind of hell upon earth, and the high-road to the hell of the damned hereafter. Have we not, then, every reason to know and feel that the reason why so many marriages prove unhappy is, because many enter them "from guilty consciences, and therefore their marriages are not blessed by God"?

Q. Can the bond or tie of marriage be ever broken?

A. It never can, but by the death of the husband or wife. *Matt. xix.*; *Rom. vii.*; *I. Cor. vii.*

6. The bond or tie of marriage can never be so broken that either of the married parties may marry again, except "by the death of the husband or wife". It follows from the very nature of the end of marriage itself, and still more from the institution and ordinance of Almighty God, that "the bond or tie of marriage", which subsists between married people, can in no case whatsoever, nor upon any account whatsoever, be broken by any human power or authority while both the parties are alive. So that, though for just causes, and especially for adultery, husband and wife may be separated from one another as to their personal cohabitation, yet still they continue married people; "the bond or tie of marriage" still remains in its full force between them, and if

either of them should marry another person, he or she would be guilty of adultery.

7. This indissolubility of marriage arises both from the nature and end of marriage, and also from the express command of Almighty God. "That the bond or tie of marriage" can never be broken during the life of the husband and wife, can be shown from the very nature and end of marriage. The nature and end of marriage, as we have already said, are the propagation of mankind, and the education of children, and also that the married parties may be a mutual help and comfort to one another during their days in this world. Now it is evident that, on both these grounds, the nature of marriage requires that "the bond or tie" be never broken.

8. That mankind should be propagated, it is essential that the bond of marriage should remain unbroken. Man is different from all other creatures when he first comes into the world. The different other creatures, when they come into the world, require very little attention from the male parent, as the female can sufficiently support them until they can provide for themselves, which they do in a very short time. Man, on the contrary, stands in need of the attention of both father and mother during his infancy. He requires the attention of the mother, that he may be nursed and tended, and the attention of the father, in order that all necessities both for mother and child may be procured by him. And this necessity of attention on the part of the father is not of short duration, as is the case with other animals, but must continue for a very long time, as the child cannot, for many years, be able to provide for himself.*

9. The education of a child also requires the united care of father and mother; for, from the dawn of reason until manhood, redoubled attention on their

part, is required, that the child may be educated properly, whether as a man, a citizen, or a Christian. Now if the "bond or tie of marriage" could be broken, and if it were, in any case, lawful for married people to separate so as to be bound, no longer by the marriage tie, many would soon avail themselves of the liberty allowed, and then a door would be opened, not only to the destruction of children, both as to their support and education, but likewise to debaucheries, and an universal corruption of manners, that must be of infinite prejudice to the multiplication of mankind, which is the end of marriage.

10. Besides, what kind of solid comfort could married people have in each other, if their marriage was not indissoluble? It is this indissolubility of marriage which makes the parties enter, with all their heart, into everything calculated to promote their mutual happiness and welfare. It is this which invincibly fixes their affections on their common concerns. It is this which gives a permanency to their love for one another. In a word, the indissolubility of marriage is the greatest incentive to make them bear their crosses, and put up with anything disagreeable in each other's tempers, and carefully to avoid giving any just handle of discontent to one another. They are joined together for better and for worse; they are married, and can no more be separated while life remains; therefore they must make the best of it they can, and content themselves. But, on the contrary, if "the bond or tie of marriage" were dissoluble, it would, in the long run, differ nothing from the state of concubinage, and be attended with all its bad consequences. Again, if we look on marriage as a civil contract, its indissolubility is no less manifest; for the good and happiness of the state being the end of marriage as a civil contract, this end could not be procured if the bond

of marriage was dissoluble, because abandoned and neglected children, endless dissensions in families, and confusion about the division of their property—being the natural consequences of the dissolubility of marriage—must necessarily be a source of great misery to human society.†

11. If we consider Matrimony not merely as a natural and civil contract, but as a Sacrament, in which we should always view it, we shall see that it is indissoluble, and that the Scriptures speak of it as such. The Sacrament of marriage among Christians is, by the appointment of Jesus Christ, a sacred sign and symbol of His indissoluble union with His Church; and on this account St. Paul insists upon this as the most powerful motive to engage the married people to love one another. Because, as the bond of their marriage union is a symbol of the union of Christ with His Church, they ought, therefore, to imitate the conduct of Jesus Christ and His Church, in their behaviour to each other. The husband, says he, is head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church: therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their husbands in all things: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved His Church. . . . So ought also men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ did the Church”—*Ephes. v. 28*. Now all the reasoning of the apostle would fall to the ground, and be without point, if marriage, as a Sacrament, did not necessarily require to be indissoluble, for the sacred union between Christ and His Church—of which Christian marriage is the symbol—can never be dissolved.

Q. Can you show from the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, that the bond of marriage can never be broken?

A. Yes; the words of Jesus Christ clearly prove it.

12. We are told in the Gospel of St. Matthew, that when Jesus Christ was about to raise the contract of marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament, in order that all Christians should be enabled to perform the important and exalted duties which His holy religion required from married people, and when He was about to ordain it as a sign of His indissoluble union with His Church, He abrogated all permission given to Jews of dissolving marriages, and of marrying others while the former partners were alive, and pronounced the indissolubility of the marriage tie by these words: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder"—*Matt. xix. 6*. Here He plainly declares, both that the bond of marriage is the work of God, and that no man can break what He has so united. And when the Pharisees objected to Him on this occasion, that Moses allowed a man to put away his wife, and marry another, He replied by declaring that this was merely permitted to the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts: "Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives". And He then immediately added, "that from the beginning it was not so"; which words go to prove, that marriage, as originally instituted, was, by the law of God, indissoluble.

13. Having declared the indissolubility of marriage, by the words, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder", Christ endeavours to impress more and more on the minds of the Pharisees what He had said, and goes on to speak of the woful consequences of putting away one's wife or husband: "And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery"—*Matt. xix. 9*. These words of our Lord evidently

prove, that, by the law of the Gospel, "the bond or tie of marriage" can never be broken, and that married people, *whosoever* they be, though they may live separate from one another's company, yet can never be loosed from the marriage tie; and that if either party, so separated from the other, on account of fornication, for example, should presume to marry another whilst the former partner is alive, such an act would be no marriage at all before God, but lead to a state of damnable adultery.

Q. Can it be inferred from the words of Jesus Christ that the bond of marriage is dissolved by the fornication of one of the parties?

A. Such doctrine does not follow from the words of Christ.

14. When Jesus Christ says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery", His words do not imply that by the fornication of either party the "bond or tie of marriage" is broken, and that either of the parties, even the innocent party, may marry again. That, in the words related of Him in St. Matthew, He did not intend that, in the case of fornication, a husband or wife could marry another, is evident from the relation St. Mark gives us of what our Saviour said in reference to marriage. The words of St. Mark are, "whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her"; and these words clearly prove that the exception of fornication, mentioned by St. Matthew, cannot apply to the husband's marrying again, but to the lawfulness of putting away his wife for any cause but fornication. That the text of St. Matthew is rather obscure, when taken separately, we must allow; but if compared with the account given by St. Mark, and the words of St. Luke, and all the other texts on the subject, the meaning is clear, decisive, and incontrovertible.

15. In St. Luke, the law of the indissolubility of marriage is more particularly repeated by our Saviour, on an occasion distinct from that related by St. Matthew. After having introduced the parable of the unjust steward, and before He began the history of Lazarus and Dives the rich glutton, He interposes this declaration: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery"—*Luke*, xvi. 18. Here we see none are excepted—*every one* includes all universally, and both parties are equally guilty; as he who puts away his wife and marries another, and also he who marries her who is put away, commit adultery. These words prove to a demonstration, that, in whatever case the separation is made, the bond of marriage still continues undissolved, so that neither party can marry any other without being guilty of that horrid crime. On this clear text St. Augustine writes thus: "Who are we, then, that we should say, one is guilty of adultery who puts away his wife and marries another; and another who does the same is not guilty of adultery? for seeing that the Gospel says, *every one* commits adultery who does this (and consequently *all* who do it), that is, who putting away his wife marries another; without doubt both are included, both he, who for any other cause besides fornication, puts away his wife, and he who puts her away for the cause of fornication"—*Lib. 1. De adult. conjug. cap. 9.*

Q. Can you prove from the words of St. Paul that the bond of marriage cannot be broken during the life of husband or wife?

A. Yes; St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, is equally clear on this doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage.

16. St. Paul, who is doubtless the most infallible interpreter of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, declares

the indissolubility of marriage in the strongest terms. "The woman that hath a husband", says he, "whilst her husband liveth, is bound to the law; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Wherefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be with another man; but if her husband be dead she is freed from the law of her husband; so that she is not an adulteress, if she be with another man"—*Rom. vii. 2.* See in what express and general terms, without any exception, he declares that death alone can dissolve the bond of marriage, so as to make it lawful for either party to marry any other. If it be supposed lawful for the husband to put away his wife on account of her fornication, and to marry again, as being the innocent party, then either the bond of marriage is dissolved, or it is not; if it be not dissolved, it can never be lawful, even for the innocent party to marry; if it be dissolved, then even the guilty party can lawfully marry, because no less free than the other; and yet St. Paul expressly says: "Not I, but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband; and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband"—*I. Cor. vii. 10*; and our Lord, in St. Matthew, says: "And he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery".†

17. The Church of Christ has never understood the exception of fornication as implying a dissolution of the bond of marriage, or as in any respect favouring the innocent party; and condemns, in the strongest terms, those who teach that it does so. The holy Council of Trent declares that the indissolubility of the marriage tie is the doctrine of the Church of Christ, and pronounces *anathema* upon all those who shall say that the Church is mistaken in teaching so: "If any one shall say that the Church

is mistaken in having taught and in teaching, according to the evangelical and apostolic doctrine, that the bond of marriage cannot be dissolved by the adultery of either of the parties ; and that both, or even the innocent party who gives no cause to the adultery, cannot contract another marriage whilst the other party is alive ; and that he is guilty of adultery, who, putting away the adulteress, marries another, as is also she who, leaving the adulterer, marries another : let him be *anathema*"—Sess. xxiv. can. 7. Here we see the infallible authority of the Church of Christ declaring the indissolubility of marriage to be the evangelical and apostolical interpretation of all the texts of Scripture in reference to this subject, and condemning all those who teach the contrary.*

18. Let it be remembered, then, that no divorce—though obtained in a court of law—no guilt, no desertion, however wanton and unfeeling, no years of absence, can ever break the marriage bond. Nothing but a certain knowledge of the death of one party, can make it lawful for the other party to marry. Although it might cause public scandal, although the honour of whole families may be at stake, although children would be exposed to shame and destitution by a separation, the guilty parties to these false second marriages must separate under pain of damnation. In cases where a second contract has been made whilst both parties knew of a former one, and only doubted, but were not sure of the death of the first husband or wife, they have no right to live together under favour of this doubt, because they married in bad faith. How horrible, then, the guilt of those who enter knowingly into these sacrilegious unions ! §

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE.

* If Protestantism, or Unitarianism, or any other form of error, did nothing else than simply to remove from the sacrament of Matrimony its sacramental character—its sanctifying character,—by that very act, that error of religious unbelief, it destroys society. The man who destroys, in the least degree, the firmness of the bond that can never be broken, because it is bound by the hand of God, and sealed with the sacramental seal,—the man that touches that bond, the man that takes from that sacrament one single iota of its grace, makes himself thereby the enemy of society, and pollutes the very fountain-head from which the stream of our life comes. When, as the prophet of old came into the city of Jericho, they showed him the stream that ran by the city walls, and they told him: “Now, here is a stream of water: whoever drinks of that water dies; our people are dying either of thirst or of the poisoned waters”. He did not attempt to heal the stream, as it flowed thereby; but he took to himself salt, and he blessed that salt, and he said to the people: “Bring me to the fountain out of which this river cometh”. And they brought him up into the mountain: and there they showed him the fountain-head of the stream. “Here”, he says, “here must we heal it”. He put the blessed salt into the fountain, the spring from which the stream came, and he said: “Now I have healed these waters, and there shall be no more death in them”. Thus, he purified the fountain-head of the spring of waters of Jericho. Such is the sacrament of marriage to human society. The future of the world, the moral future of mankind—of the rising generations, all depend upon the purity and the sanctity of the matrimonial tie. There does the Church of God throw, as it were, her sacramental salt into the fountain-head of our nature, and so sanctifies the humanity that springs from its source.

The Church of God proclaims that the marriage bond no man can dissolve; that that marriage bond, so long as death does not come in to separate the man and wife—that that marriage bond is the one contract which no power on this earth can dissolve. Consequently, the Catholic woman mar-

ried to the Catholic man, knows that the moment their lips mutually pronounce their marriage vows, her position is defined and established forevermore; that no one can put her down from the holy eminence of wife or of mother, and that the throne which she occupies in the household she never can live to see occupied by another; that her children are assured to her; and that she is left in her undisputed empire and control over them. She knows that, no matter how the world may prosper or otherwise with her, that she is sure, at least, of her position as a wife, and of her claims to her husband's love, and of the allegiance of his worship. She knows that, even though she may have wedded him in the days of poverty, and that should he rise to some great and successful position—even if he become an emperor—she must rise with him, and that he can never discard her; and consequently, she feels that her children are her own for ever.—*Very Rev. Thos. Burke, O.P.*

ST. ELIZABETH AND THE CONVERSION OF HER HUSBAND.

† St. Elizabeth, wife of Dionysius, King of Portugal, made it her principal study to pay to her husband the most dutiful respect, love, and obedience, and bore his injuries with invincible meekness and patience. Though Dionysius was a friend of justice, and a valiant, bountiful, and compassionate prince, yet he was, in his youth, a worldly man, and defiled the sanctity of the nuptial bed with abominable lusts. The good queen used all her endeavours to reclaim him, grieving most sensibly for the offence to God, and the scandal given to the people; and she never ceased to weep herself, and to procure the prayers of others for his conversion. She strove to gain him only by courtesy, and with constant sweetness and cheerfulness cherished his natural children, and took great care of their education. By these means she softened the heart of the king, who, by the succour of a powerful grace, rose out of the filthy puddle in which he had wallowed for a long time, and kept ever after the fidelity that was due to his virtuous consort. His extraordinary virtues, particularly his liberality, justice, and constancy, are highly extolled by the Portuguese; and after his entire conversion, he was the idol and glory of his people.—*Alban Butler.*

THE SACRED BOND OF MARRIAGE ASSAILED.

† It is not so easy as we may think to make that glorious reparation; it is not so easy to preserve all the traditions of

faith and sanctity that have come down to us; it requires great and constant grace from God and Divine mercy and powerful aid and help from the Lord our God, to enable us to do this. When we look around us upon the manhood of the world, when we behold the cultivated intellect of this age of ours arrive as at the conclusion of all its philosophical knowledge, at the denial and repudiation of God; when we behold the novelists of the age arrive as at the conclusion of all their study, at the maxim that it is better to be a sinner than holy, that it is better to be unchaste than pure; when we behold the historians and the learned guides of our age, men of knowledge and intelligence, arriving at conclusions like that publicly propounded by one of the leading historians, with regard to this country—"If the Irish were not so chaste they would be a better people; they would be wealthier and stronger if they thought more of this world and less of offending God"; when we find that even when God has blessed a people with great power, when He has granted victory to their arms, when He has dispersed all their adversaries and scattered their enemies, that this people think their victory is not complete until they have crushed and broken down the Holy Church that Jesus Christ founded; when we see all this universal depravity, this perversion of literature, debasement of principle, repudiation of all international honour, rejection of family ties and purity; when we find the legislators of every kingdom in the world actively engaged in futile efforts to unbind that sacred bond of which Jesus Christ spoke when He said—"Those that God has joined together let no man put asunder"—when we see all this, we conclude that it is not so easy for a people to keep to God unless the Almighty God grants them a special grace.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE DIVORCE BETWEEN HENRY VIII. AND QUEEN CATHERINE.

§ On the 31st day of May, 1529, the legatine court began to sit at Blackfriars. The king and queen appeared according to summons. The king stated his reasons for a divorce. When he had done, the queen fell upon her knees before him, and, in a most pathetic speech, refuted every article that had been alleged against her, and appealed to the king's conscience for the truth of what she said. She then remonstrated, in strong terms, with the court, upon the peculiar hardships of her situation, in a foreign country, amidst strangers and enemies, without support, without counsel, abandoned and accused by her once dearest friend and sovereign

—her very husband. Having thus expressed her sentiments, she put herself under the protection of her nephew, the emperor, made a solemn appeal from that court to the Pope, and immediately retired. As the process of divorce was not expedited, King Henry grew impatient; and Anna Boleyn, eager to become the wife and queen of Henry, thought the time long. On the 14th day of November, 1532, the king caused the marriage ceremony to be privately performed between him and Anna Boleyn. It was performed by Dr. Roland Lee; Cranmer was present, the divorce being yet undecided. After some months, the appearance of pregnancy in Anna divulging the secret, time would admit of no longer delay. The king directed a commission to be made out which should empower the archbishop, Cranmer, to pronounce the sentence of divorce between him and Queen Catherine. He signed the commission in due form; whence it appears that the divorce, in fact was sanctioned by no other than the king's authority. In virtue of that commission, the pliant Cranmer pronounced, on the 23rd of May, 1533, that the marriage between King Henry and the Princess Catherine was null and void.—*Reeve.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Does marriage contracted through unworthy motives prove unhappy?
2. Can you show, by example from the book of Tobias, the evil consequences of marriage through unworthy motives?
3. Should the example taken from the book of Tobias warn persons against marrying from unworthy motives?
4. Does marriage entered into with a guilty conscience render it an unhappy one?
5. Does God bless marriages contracted with guilty consciences?
6. Can a person marry again during the life of the husband or wife?
7. Does the end of marriage require that its bond should never be broken?
8. Is the indissolubility of the marriage tie necessary for the propagation of mankind?
9. Is the indissolubility of marriage necessary for the education of children?

10. Is the indissolubility of marriage necessary for the permanent love of husband and wife, and for the well-being of society?

11. Can you show from Scripture that marriage, as a Sacrament, is indissoluble?

12. Can you prove from St. Matthew the indissolubility of marriage?

13. Does Jesus Christ endeavour to impress on the Pharisees the indissolubility of marriage?

14. How do you prove that the marriage tie cannot be broken by fornication of the husband or wife?

15. What does Christ say in St. Luke as to the indissolubility of marriage?

16. Can you prove the indissolubility of marriage from the words of St. Paul?

17. Has the Church pronounced that the tie of marriage is indissoluble?

18. Should parties separate, if there be no certainty of the death of the first husband or wife?

PRACTICE.

1. Let husbands and wives never forget that no power on earth can sever the marriage tie.

2. Know, that though a husband and wife should live separately, the marriage tie continues.

3. A person should on no account marry until he or she be certain that the former husband or wife is dead.

PRAYER.

O Lord! we give thee thanks for the holy institution of marriage, and the blessings Thou hast bestowed on those who have entered into that state in obedience to Thy will. Thou hast pronounced, in the most solemn terms, the indissolubility of the marriage tie, and hast declared that no power on earth can sever husband and wife; grant, O Lord! that all those united in the sacred bond of marriage may live in peace and harmony in this world, and that by so living they may obtain eternal peace and happiness hereafter. Amen.

CHAPTER XLII.

ON THE DUTIES OF MARRIED PEOPLE.

Q. What are the duties which a husband owes his wife, and a wife owes her husband?

A. The reciprocal duties of man and wife are, love, fidelity, forbearance, patience, and submission.

1. The first duty which husbands and wives owe each other is love and affection. Matrimony is indeed a holy state; and the entering into that state may truly be called one of the most important actions in life. In fact, happiness in this world, and preparing for happiness in the next, in a great measure depend upon it. Indeed, if all the duties which the law of God requires from those who are engaged in the married state be exactly complied with, that state becomes an emblem of Heaven itself, and conducts to that happy place at last; but if, on the contrary, these duties be neglected, the married state becomes a resemblance of Hell, and will at last end in eternal misery. From the institution and nature of the holy state of matrimony, described in the book of Genesis, and from the account of it given us by God Himself, the following truths flow: First, that two people, being joined in marriage, are no longer to be considered as separate people, or different from one another, having separate views, separate designs, or separate interests; but as two persons joined together in one, that is, joined together in the strictest bond of union that possibly can be between two persons in this world; and, consequently, they are bound by every tie to wish and promote each other's felicity as

their own : " A man shall leave father and mother", says God, " and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh".

2. Considering, then, the strict union there is between married people, an union which nothing but death can dissolve, it strikes us at once that the most essential means of promoting their common happiness in life, is to preserve peace and concord among themselves by a mutual love. Where peace is wanting, and discord and dissension reign, there happiness cannot dwell. If two single people should quarrel and disagree with each other, it will certainly make them less happy than they would otherwise be; but they have a remedy—they may separate from one another, and seek their happiness in the society of a more agreeable friend; but in the married state this cannot be done, for though they should separate as to their persons, the bond of marriage still remains entire; and so strong is it, that nothing but the death of one of the parties can dissolve it.

3. Married parties should therefore make it their constant study to live united together in mutual love, peace, and harmony during life, and to have but one heart and one mind, as if they were but one and the same person. This it is that is signified by the ceremony of joining their hands together at the time of the contract, and by putting a ring, which has no end, on the finger of the bride, that she may have her duty, as it were, always before her eyes, and be constantly reminded of the endless love and perpetual fidelity which the married pair owe to each other. Without a sincere love it is impossible for them to continue long in peace and harmony, and without peace and concord they cannot expect to enjoy Christian happiness. For though worldly prosperity should abound with married people, discord embitters all the sweets of their plenty, and

hinders them from enjoying their blessings; whereas union and concord among themselves double all these enjoyments, and enhance the value of their prosperity. On the contrary, if they meet with crosses and afflictions in this life, peace and concord will alleviate these afflictions, and from their mutual sympathy and consolation will diminish their smart; but discord and disunion will increase the poignancy of all their other sufferings, and make them miserable indeed.

4. Now, to procure and preserve this peace and harmony, they must have a mutual love for each other. "Husbands, love your wives", says St. Paul, "as Christ also loved the Church. . . . So, also, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church"—*Eph. v. 29*. In these words you see how strictly this mutual love between married people is commanded: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved His Church". How did Christ love His Church? Sometimes we see Him, like a skilful and wise physician, treating her infirmities with the greatest compassion and tenderness; sometimes, as an indulgent father, bearing with the imperfections of His children with great indulgence; sometimes, like the good Samaritan, by the most charitable beneficence, gaining the hearts even of His enemies; sometimes, as an affectionate spouse, caressing His Church with the most endearing attention. Such, also, ought to be the conduct of husbands to their wives, and of wives to their husbands, for the duties are reciprocal—with compassion and tenderness, endeavouring to remedy their failings; like an indulgent parent, bearing their natural infirmities; by a kind and affable behaviour, soothing and curing the sallies of their passion.

Q. What is the second duty which a husband owes his wife, and a wife owes her husband?

A. Conjugal fidelity.

5. The second duty of married persons to each other is that of conjugal fidelity. The marriage bond is one of God's own making, and so close is this sacred union, that, in Holy Scripture, husband and wife are said to have one body: "They shall be two in one flesh"—*Gen. ii. 24*. How wicked, then, and how abominable is that sin which violates a union so intimate and holy! Sometimes females become less scrupulous after marriage than before, because they think they can sin with more impunity. But the eye of God is ever open, and He will punish them then more than ever, because their sin is greater, on account of the greater wrong done, and the violation of a holy sacrament. "What God hath joined together", said our Lord Jesus Christ, in words of solemn warning, "let no man put asunder"—*Matt. xix. 6*. Woe! then, to the shameless woman who defiles in her own person the marriage Sacrament, and tramples on her most sacred vows! God will visit her sin upon her guilty head. Woe to the guilty man who despises the warning of Jesus Christ, putting asunder what He has joined together, and planting a poisoned dagger in his neighbour's bosom!—"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge"—*Heb. xii. 4*. In this matter, dear Christians, do not trust even to your good intentions, but fly from danger at its first approach, and pray that you may not fall into temptation. And you especially, Christian wife, if you would be secure in that fidelity which you have plighted at the altar, never listen to strange and flattering tongues, nor allow yourself to indulge an excessive love of society. Be not fond

of expensive dresses, and particularly shun all those fashions which are contrary to Christian modesty.

Q. What is the third duty of married persons to each other?

A. The third duty of married people is mutual forbearance.

6. The third duty of married persons to each other is that of mutual forbearance and condescension. Husbands and wives should not be too exacting towards each other, nor should they insist too strongly on the performance of any little thing they require; they should rather condescend to each other's weaknesses and imperfections, bearing each other's infirmities with mildness and patience, ever ready to forgive each other when one has said or done anything harsh or disagreeable to the other; in a word, to bear and forbear. The husband should not consider his authority over his wife as that of a master over a slave, or as that of a father over a daughter, but should look on her as an assistant, and not as a servant. The wife should look on her husband as a partner to whom she owes subjection, and so must be obedient to him in everything which is not sinful. The husband will correct a scolding wife by kind words better than by blows and curses. The wife will subdue a violent husband by silence and patience better than by contradiction and sharp answers.

7. Married people must bear in mind that there are none to be found without their faults, weaknesses, and imperfections; that there are numbers of failings and inequalities of temper which the very best people are subject to, and which do not appear to one another before marriage, but which will soon be discovered on a nearer acquaintance. Before marriage all is harmony and peace; one endeavours to humour the inclinations of the other, to avoid giving the least

offence, and to sacrifice his own will rather than oppose the will of the other. At that time they are truly two in one mind; every exertion is made to conceal their imperfections, and to appear in each other's eyes exactly the reverse of what they are in themselves. You must, therefore, lay to your account with meeting such things in one you marry; but you must remember that the one you marry will meet with the same things in you. The most effectual remedy, then, for the displeasure these things may occasion, are mutual forbearance and condescension.

8. To this want of mutual forbearance and condescension must be attributed all the jars and miseries that attend the married state. When discord and disagreement happen between married people from the fault of the husband or the wife, it seldom happens that one behaves in a manner that may heal the difference, but acts so as to make matters worse and worse; and to excuse his or her conduct, the impossibility of putting up with the ill-behaviour of the other is given as a plea. Thus the husband who ill-treats his wife, and, perhaps, even beats her, pleads necessity—that his wife is of such a bad temper—that she is continually out of humour—that she can never show him a fair face, but is always scolding and tormenting him—that he must use severe correction with her, and make her obedient. The wife, on the other hand, to palliate her undutiful behaviour to her husband, flies to the same excuse, and, perhaps, adds that he is never at home, throws away his money in company and drinking, and leaves her to starve, and the like. This is, to be sure, one of the greatest trials that a poor woman can meet with; but what must she do? If she follows the suggestion of passion, she will only hurt her own soul, and make things worse and worse.

9. It is too much to be feared that if all circumstances were known between married people who do not agree, this would often be found to be one of the chief causes of their misery : that when the husband is out of humour, and does anything amiss, the wife flies into a passion, raises her anger ; words ensue, the husband becomes warm, the wife equally warm ; the dispute increases ; the husband criminales the wife, and the wife criminales the husband. When one is accused, and cannot exculpate himself, he retorts upon the other by accusing her of some former failing. Words follow words ; old sores are opened, old grievances are renewed, the most serious domestic evils introduced. Thus home and the company of his wife are made disagreeable to the husband, and force him to seek that satisfaction in company abroad which he does not find in his own house.

10. But must the wife bear all the ill-humour of her husband, as if she had neither sense nor feeling ? Must she see herself and her children reduced to misery, and say nothing ? Far from it. It is her duty to use every prudent measure to reclaim her husband ; the only question is about the manner of doing so. If constant experience shows that treating him with harshness, losing her temper, and giving vent to her passion, instead of proving a remedy, serve only to exasperate the evil, and greatly damage her own soul, does not common sense, as well as the law of God, condemn that method ? What, therefore, the law of Christ and the spirit of religion require from her is this : to use all her endeavours to gain her husband's affections by a mild, submissive, and endearing behaviour, that she may make him take a liking to her company and a pleasure in being with her, and this she has very much in her power to do, if she only can command her own temper, and, as the word of God expresses it, " has a tongue that

can command and mitigate". When he is sober, and kept in good humour by such a winning behaviour, let her endeavour to make him sensible of the evil of his ways, not by complaining or quarrelling, but with gentleness, regretting it as a misfortune, and showing more concern for the danger of his own soul than what she herself has to suffer by it.*

11. Above all things, she must frequently pour out her most fervent prayers to God for his conversion, and endeavour to render her prayers agreeable to God by a life of virtue and piety. If she act with perseverance in such conduct, one of two things will happen—either Almighty God will reward her piety, and crown her wishes by the conversion of her husband, to her great joy; or if He permit the trial to continue, she may confidently expect a great reward in heavenly glory, and will have the consolation to know, that if their worldly affairs go to ruin by her husband's ill-conduct, she has not been the guilty cause of forcing him on to it by a provoking behaviour. This is the line of conduct that husband and wife should pursue towards each other; for since God's blessing and the precious inheritance of Jesus Christ depend on peace and unity, one should yield and submit to the other for the sake of peace. Let the married parties, then, bear patiently each other's faults and infirmities, continue in the marriage bond with Christian courage until death; for by so doing they will procure for themselves domestic peace and happiness here below, and eternal happiness hereafter.†

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. MONICA A MODEL TO WIVES.

* St. Monica, mother of the great St. Augustine, as soon as she was marriageable, was disposed of to one Patricius, a man of honour and probity, but an idolater. She obeyed and served him as her master, and laboured to gain him to God though the chief argument she used, whereby to reclaim him from his vices, was the sanctity of her conduct, enforced by an affectionate, obliging behaviour, by which she commanded his love, respect, and esteem. She tolerated the injuries done by him to her marriage-bed in such a manner, as never to make him the least bitter reproach on that subject. As on the one hand he was very good-natured and loving, so on the other he was hasty and choleric. Monica never thwarted him by the least action or word while she saw him in anger; but when the fit was over, and he was calm, she mildly gave him her reasons, and an account of her actions. When she saw other wives bearing the marks of their husbands' anger on their disfigured faces, and heard them blaming their roughness of temper or debaucheries, she would answer them: "Lay the blame rather on yourselves and your tongues". She bore all his sallies with patience and silence, made no other return but that of a greater obsequiousness, and waited an opportunity to make him sensible of his mistake, when that was necessary; and one of the happy fruits she gained by her patience, was her husband's conversion to Christ, who thereupon became chaste, and faithful to all the duties of a good Christian.—*Alban Butler*.

ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND, AND HER INFLUENCE OVER HER HUSBAND, MALCOLM.

† St. Margaret, grand-niece to St. Edward the Confessor, was married and crowned Queen of Scotland in 1070, being then twenty-four years of age. The marriage was solemnized at King Malcolm's royal castle at Dunfermline, built in the midst of a beautiful plain, surrounded with woods, rocks, and rivers, Malcolm was rough and unpolished, but neither haughty nor capricious. Margaret, by the most tender complaisance, and the most condescending and engaging carriage, always full of respect, gained so great an ascendant over him as to seem entirely mistress of his heart. She softened his temper, cultivated his mind, polished his manners, and in-

spired him with the most perfect sentiments of all Christian virtues, so that he became one of the most virtuous kings that had ever adorned the Scottish throne. And so much was the king charmed with her wisdom and piety, that he not only left to her the whole management of his domestic affairs, but followed her prudent advice in the government of his kingdom.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Does happiness here and hereafter depend, in a great measure, upon the manner in which the duties of the married state are performed?
2. What is the best means of promoting mutual happiness between married people?
3. Are lasting peace and harmony signified by the marriage ring?
4. Should married parties take Jesus Christ as a model in their love of each other?
5. Is conjugal fidelity an essential duty of married people?
6. Is mutual forbearance and condescension a necessary duty of married people?
7. What are the motives that should induce married parties to observe mutual forbearance?
8. What are the excuses usually given by husband and wife for their ill-usage of each other?
9. To what are to be attributed the recriminations of husband and wife?
10. In what manner should a wife act towards her husband in order to secure domestic peace?
11. What shall result from kindness on the part of the wife to the husband?

PRACTICE.

1. Let husbands and wives recollect that their happiness here and hereafter depends very much on the right performance of the duties of the married state.
2. Husbands should always treat their wives with consideration and kindness.
3. Wives should ever be submissive to their husbands, and avoid everything that may irritate them.

PRAYER.

O my God! we have now been taught the great necessity of union and concord between married parties, and that their happiness in this world, and eternal happiness in the world to come, will depend, in a great measure, on their mutual love and forbearance. Grant, dear Lord, that all those who have entered the holy state of matrimony, may live in peace, harmony, and love, may practise what Thy holy law requires of them, that by so doing they may obtain of Thee all the graces, comfort, and blessings which that Sacrament confers—union, peace, and happiness here below and eternal rest and repose hereafter. Amen.

 CHAPTER XLIII.

 ON THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RESURRECTION OF
THE BODY.

Q. Can the Sacraments be received more than once?

A. All can, except Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders; which imprint on the soul a character, or spiritual mark, that never can be effaced.

1. There are some of the Sacraments that we can often receive, and others that we cannot receive "more than once". The Sacraments which we can receive more than once, are the Blessed Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony. Those which we cannot receive "more than once", are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. And the reason why these three Sacraments cannot be received more than once is, that they "imprint on the soul a character, or spiritual mark, that can never be effaced".

2. This "character, or spiritual mark, imprinted on the soul", may be supposed to be somewhat simi-

lar to the impression of a seal upon soft wax ; and it denotes that the person who receives it, is thereby consecrated and dedicated to the service of God, according to the intention for which the Sacrament was instituted. Thus the "character" imprinted by Baptism denotes, that the person who has it, is consecrated to God as a Christian, is a member of the Church of Christ, and entitled to receive all the other Sacraments of the Church, as helps to enable him to serve God in that quality. The "character" imprinted by Confirmation denotes, that the person who has it, is dedicated to the service of God as His soldier ; and in that quality gives him arms and strength to confess openly and defend the religion of Christ, and to resist the assaults of our common enemies—the devil, the world, and the flesh ; to do which the grace of that Sacrament enables him. The "character" of Holy Orders denotes, that the person who has it, is consecrated to God to serve at His altar ; and it honourably distinguishes him from the ordinary faithful, who are only laics, makes him a chief officer of the Church of God, which is a sacred militia—an army ranged under the standard of the Cross—and gives him the power of administering the Sacraments to the faithful. This character, or spiritual mark, "never can be effaced," either by sin, or even by apostacy and infidelity—either in this life or the life to come ; for if a person be once baptized, or confirmed, or ordained a Priest, he remains so for ever ; and in the next life, these sacred characters will be a great increase of glory to those who enter Heaven, and of misery to those who go to Hell. "In the just," says St. Augustine, "it remains for a reward ; in the wicked it remains for judgment."

Q. Which Sacraments are most necessary to us !

A. Baptism and Penance.

3. Baptism and Penance are certainly the "most necessary to us" of all the Sacraments. Baptism is most necessary, because without it we cannot receive any of the other Sacraments, nor can we without it, as our Lord assures us, enter the kingdom of Heaven. It has been ordained by Christ as the only means of receiving forgiveness of Original sin, and of all the sins committed before it: and without it we can never partake of the merits of Christ's sufferings, so as to become members of His body.

4. Penance, as Baptism, is also the "most necessary to us" of all the Sacraments, because it directly forgives sin, and has been instituted for that purpose. The other five Sacraments have not been instituted to forgive sins, nor do they blot out sin of themselves, and consequently, salvation, strictly speaking, can be obtained without them; but it is impossible to obtain salvation while we are in the state of sin, and at enmity with God, without Penance. For this Sacrament is appointed by Jesus Christ to be the means of restoring us to the friendship of God, by cleansing us from the guilt of actual sins committed after Baptism, in the same way as Baptism itself is the means of cleansing us from Original sin, and from all actual sins committed before Baptism. Therefore, the Sacrament of Penance is absolutely necessary for salvation to those who have lost the grace of God by mortal sin after Baptism, as Baptism itself is to those who have not yet received it, and, consequently, with Baptism, is "most necessary for us." And though it be true that perfect contrition, arising from a perfect love of God above all things, will always find mercy with God, and obtain pardon for sins committed both before and after Baptism; yet, as before Baptism this perfect contrition does not exempt the person who has it from the necessity of being baptized.

when Baptism can be had ; and, where Baptism cannot be had, will not find mercy with God, unless it be accompanied with the desire of Baptism ; so likewise with regard to mortal sins committed after Baptism, the most perfect contrition does not exempt the person who has it from the obligation of receiving the Sacrament of Penance when he can receive it ; and when that Sacrament cannot be received, his contrition will be of no avail unless it include the desire of, and the resolution to receive, the Sacrament of Penance, whenever he has it in his power to do so.

Q. Why did Christ institute the Sacraments ?

A. For the sanctification of our souls, and to prepare us for a happy and glorious resurrection.

5. Christ instituted the Sacraments “for the sanctification of our souls”, for they are the instruments by which we are enabled to perform all our Christian duties, and are also the precious means by which the merits of Christ’s passion and death are applied to “the sanctification of our souls”. St. Ambrose calls the Sacraments “most wholesome medicines, instituted by Christ either to recover or preserve the health of the soul”. The grace by which our sins are forgiven and our souls sanctified, is certainly the greatest gift we can receive from God in this life. Now, it is for this express purpose that “Christ instituted the Sacraments”, for, by receiving them with proper dispositions, our souls, though previously stained by the guilt of mortal sin, are restored to the grace and friendship of God, and sanctified in His sacred eyes.

6. Christ has “instituted the Sacraments”, not only for the purposes of cleansing us from sin, and restoring us to His friendship and favour, but also

that we may receive an increase of justifying grace ; for when we receive any of the Sacraments, called *the Sacraments of the living*, our souls are sanctified more and more, and rendered more pure, holy, and beautiful, in the sight of God. Neglect not then, dear children, the reception of the Sacraments ; for, being of inestimable value in contributing to “the sanctification of our souls”, they “prepare us for a happy and glorious resurrection on the Last Day.

Q. What means the resurrection of the body ?

A. That we shall all rise again on the Last Day, with the same bodies which we had in this life.

7. One day, dear children, we shall all die ! Young as well as old, rich as well as poor, the strong equally as the weak, must sooner or later meet the stroke of death. St. Pau tells us, that it has been decreed by God that every one shall die : “It is appointed unto men once to die”—*Heb. ix.* We carry within us the seed and principle of death. Old age, sickness, infirmity, every day hurry on thousands to the grave. And this decree of death, passed on all mankind since Adam transgressed in the garden of Paradise, shall be fulfilled by the separation of the soul from the body. When the soul leaves the body we no longer live to this world : the body has no longer strength, agility, feeling, but becomes inanimate, incapable of motion or feeling. When the moment of death has come, the soul either ascends to Heaven, or descends into Hell or Purgatory ; and the body, after having remained lifeless on the bed for a few days, is committed to the earth. Dust meets dust, and the body there remains, every day becoming more and more putrid, until it moulders into the clay from which it was originally formed.*

8. But "on the Last Day, we shall all rise again with the same bodies which we had in this life"; that is, on the Last Day our souls shall be again united to the bodies we had before we died. This is what holy Job tells us, when he says: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the Last Day I shall arise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God"—*Job*, xix. The same great truth St. Paul teaches us when he says, speaking of the resurrection of the body: "For this corruptible",—that is, the body of each individual,—“must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”—*I. Cor.* xv. It is necessary "that we should all rise again the Last Day with the same bodies that we had in life", in order that these bodies, which when united to our souls, contributed to the good or evil actions we performed, should be sharers in the eternal rewards or punishments which shall be awarded by God on the Last Day.

9. But in what way shall this resurrection of the body take place? How can bodies, which long since have been corrupted, reduced to ashes, mouldered into dust, and scattered here and there, assume again the appearance of whole bodies, arise, revive, and be again united to their souls? This, indeed, we cannot comprehend, but it is not the less true on that account. We cannot, it is true, understand how all the parts and members composing the body, some of which have, perhaps, been consumed by fire, others devoured by wild beasts, more torn asunder, and scattered around in different places, can at once, in the twinkling of an eye, be brought together, and again united. But are there not many things in nature, which every day pass before our eyes, and yet we cannot comprehend them? "The resurrection of the body", is a mystery which we cannot com-

prehend, but we know that an omnipotent God can raise and unite bodies, the parts of which have long since mouldered into dust, in the same manner as He performed many other great wonders and miracles.†

10. The Patriarchs believed in “the resurrection of the body”, the Prophets predicted it, Jesus Christ confirmed that great truth, and the Apostles everywhere preached it. Difficult, then, as it may be for us to comprehend how all these bodies, which to-day are mutilated, corrupted, decomposed, and mouldering, shall one day be re-united, re-appear on earth, and be vivified by the souls that had, during life, been united to them, our belief in this truth should, nevertheless, be always firm and unshaken.

11. “With the same bodies which we had in this life”, we shall all arise on the Last Day; but we must remark, that on the Last Day, the bodies, when arisen, shall not appear with the material deformities and defects to which they had been subject during life. For example, the body of a man blind during life, will not arise blind on the Last Day, a lame man will not arise lame, nor shall the body of one mutilated, arise from the grave mutilated. Every body shall arise divested of all the imperfections which attended it during life; for God shall render it, when arising on the last day, that perfection and integrity, which had been primitively bestowed on it. It is true indeed, that the bodies of the martyrs will arise with the scars and wounds, which during life they received for confessing the name of Christ; but these scars and wounds, so far from being defects, shall lend beauty and excellency to their bodies, and shall be, as St. Augustine says, the glorious marks of the perfection of their virtues.

What do you mean by the Last Day?

A. The day of general Judgment; when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and then He will render to every one according to his works—11 Cor. v. 10; Matt. xvi. 27.

12. By the last day, we mean “the day of general Judgment; when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”. We are told in the Gospels, dear children, that when this world is about to come to an end, terrific sights shall be witnessed through the whole earth—that kingdoms and provinces shall be up in arms against each other—that cities, towns, palaces, and the most stately and costly buildings shall be subverted and destroyed—that the very rocks shall be split asunder—that the sun shall be darkened—that the moon shall be without light—that the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of Heaven shall tremble. These are, indeed, alarming signs, and enough to fill with dismay the stoutest heart. Whilst the world is in a state of commotion, and when terror and alarm has taken hold of every living thing, there will be heard the sound of a trumpet, and that sound shall be given by the Archangel at the command of God.†

13. The Last Day is now come, and the sound of that trumpet shall be heard far and wide, more so than claps of the loudest thunder. It shall pierce the deepest graves, and be heard in the depths of the sea, proclaiming aloud the alarming summons: “arise, ye dead, and come to judgment”. At that very instant the graves and tombs shall give up the bodies, which for so many ages lay buried in them, the sea shall surrender its dead, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all the children of Adam, from the first to the last, shall arise clothed in the same flesh which

they had on earth, and shall “appear before the judgment seat of Christ”.§

14. The valley of Josaphat is to be the place where this awful judgement shall take place; at least we can infer so from the prophecy of Joel, where he says: “Let them arise, and let the nations come up into the valley of Josaphat; for there I will sit to judge all nations round about”—*Joel*, iii. 12. This valley is situated near Jerusalem, within view of Mount Calvary, where the Redeemer was crucified. St. Hilary says that Christ’s judgment-seat will be placed upon the very spot where His Cross was formerly planted, that the glory of His Majesty may be made manifest in the very place where His sacred humanity suffered the greatest ignominy. He will there show forth His power, says St. Augustine, because there He showed forth His patience.||

15. From that judgment-seat, Christ “will then render to every one according to his works”, for at that judgment-seat the record of your lives will be produced, and in that record will be inserted all the good and evil actions that you have performed. “I saw a great white throne”, says St. John, “and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. . . . And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and THE BOOKS WERE OPENED; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works”—*Rev.* xx. 12. In the first place, there shall be produced at the judgment seat the book of our consciences, with all the divine records, in which our thoughts, words, and actions are carefully registered. Therein will be noted down every immodest thought, expression, and act—each and every curse we have imprecated on our selves or on our neighbours—all the scandals given by us during

our lives—all and every offence which we have committed against God. The sins of each year, each month, each day, will, in that book, be faithfully recorded.

16. Yes, dear children, on the Last Day, at the judgment seat of Christ, the picture of your lives, from the first use of reason to your latest breath, will be placed before you—sins of thought, word, and omission—sins, perhaps hidden at the tribunal of confession, through a false shame, which closed up your mouths, will be made known. In the Book of Life, too, will be recorded all the good acts you have performed, all your virtues, your works of mercy, your love of God and of your neighbour. At the judgment seat you shall undergo a strict examination as to all these works; and according as his works have been good or evil, Jesus Christ “will render to every one”.

Q. Will our bodies rise united to our souls?

A. Yes; to share in the souls’ eternal bliss or misery.

17. Yes, our bodies shall “arise united to our souls”; for no sooner shall the Archangel sound the trumpet, than the souls which had been until then either reposing in Heaven, suffering in Purgatory, or enduring the pains of the damned in Hell, shall again come on earth, and resume the same bodies which they had in this life; and both united shall arise and appear before God’s judgment seat. Our bodies shall arise united to our souls, “in order to share in the souls’ eternal bliss or misery”. As our bodies participated with our souls in the virtues we practised, and all the good works we performed during life here below, it is only just that they should participate in the recompense which the souls shall

receive in their glorious resurrection and triumphant ascension into Heaven, and "share in the souls' eternal bliss". On the other hand, as the bodies of the wicked participated with their souls in the commission of crime, in the violation of God's commands, it is only just that they should be sharers "in the souls' eternal misery".

Q. How are the bodies of the Saints to rise?

A. Glorious and immortal.

18. "The bodies of the saints", or of the just shall arise on the last day, "glorious and immortal"; for, as during this life they had been mortified with fasting and many other painful austerities, and had been the instruments of many deeds of charity and piety, they shall on the last day, arise brilliant and beautiful, brighter than the very sun, and purer than the stars. The bodies of the Saints shall arise endowed with all the beautiful qualities and advantages of a spiritualized substance, as St. Paul and the Holy Fathers tell us.†

19. They shall arise *impassible*, that is, they shall no longer be subject to pain or suffering, to hunger or cold, to sickness or infirmity. They shall arise *luminous*, that is, they shall be more brilliant than the sun, they shall glisten more than the stars, and shall be more transparent than glass. They shall arise *agile*, that is, they shall be exempt from all that weight that now presses them down, and shall move with a vigour and a rapidity of which we have now no conception. They shall too arise *subtile*, that is, they shall partake somewhat of the properties of a spirit, not that they shall be changed into a spiritual substance, but, as St. Augustine says, the harmony between the body and soul shall be such,

that the saints shall never experience the slightest repugnance, or clashing. between soul and body—the latter being submissive altogether to the former. Such, dear children, will be the bodies of the Saints, when at the last day, they shall arise united to their souls.†

Q. Are the bodies of the damned to rise glorious?

A. No ; but they shall rise immortal, to live for ever in eternal flames.

20. “The bodies of the damned” are not to arise glorious and brilliant, as the bodies of the Saints, but on the contrary shall arise in a manner suitable to their deserts, that is, foul, black, hideous, and in every way loathsome and insupportable. All those vices and filthy passions to which they were subject during life, will be depicted on their countenances on the last day. Bodies which during life had been pampered and indulged, surfeited, debauched, and defiled with filthy and abominable crimes, shall rise up from their graves with frightful looks, distorted features and convulsed limbs. And this is only as it should be ; for, as these bodies had been subservient to the souls in the commission of crime, it is only just that the marks of crime should be borne by them, and that they should bear clear testimony to the vices in which they were sharers. The bodies of the damned shall “rise immortal”, indeed, but not glorified as the bodies of the Saints. They shall rise “immortal”, but only to suffer for ever the torments of the damned ; to be consigned for ever to the dark prison of hell, and “to live for ever in eternal flames”.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE FRENCH OFFICER'S PREPARATION FOR DEATH,

* A young French officer, who was obliged to leave his country, withdrew into Spain, and, moved by the grace of God, resolved to consecrate the remainder of his life by preparing for death. Full of this design, he presented himself as a postulant at a religious house, remarkable for the austere and penitential lives of its inmates. His entreaties were earnest, and he obtained admission. During his novitiate he wrote to a sister in the following terms :—" There is scarcely a begger in Spain who is not better fed, clothed, and lodged than we are, and yet not one amongst us would exchange his condition for an empire, knowing well that death soon confounds the emperor with the meanest of his subjects, and that we carry nothing with us out of this world but our works. Five months after his profession, he was attacked with dropsy, which, in four months, terminated his early pilgrimage. Before his death, he was laid on straw and ashes, that he might die like a penitent. Taking the hand of the abbot, who stood beside him, he pressed it affectionately, and, with a look of gratitude, which affected the whole community, said, " O father ! how great is my happiness ! in opening to me the door of this monastery, you opened to me the gate of heaven. How I now rejoice that I have prepared for death ! and, oh ! how sweet it is to die, when one has a firm hope of passing from earth to heaven !

THE SEVEN MACHABEES, AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH.

† In the reign of Antiochus, the seven Machabees, together with their mother, suffered courageously the most cruel torments, rather than violate the law of the Lord, because they had a lively hope in a future resurrection. The first had his tongue cut out, and the skin of his head drawn off ; and when he was maimed in all parts, being still alive, he was brought to the fire, and fried in a frying-pan. The second being about to expire, said to the king, " Thou, indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up in the resurrection of eternal life". The third said, with confidence, " These members I have received from heaven, but for the law of God I now

despise them, because I hope to receive them again from Him". The fourth said, "It is better, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by Him". The others showed equal courage and intrepidity. The youngest, however, still remained, and Antiochus endeavoured to overcome his constancy by caresses and the promise of reward. Seeing that he could not prevail, he called his mother, and counselled her to use her influence with her son to save his life; but this generous heroine, addressing her son, said, "Look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them; consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also; so shalt thou not fear this tormentor, but being made a worthy partner with thy brethren, receive death, that I may receive thee again with them". Antiochus, enraged, vented all his fury on the youth. The admirable mother herself was the next victim of his cruelty.—II. *Machabees*, vii.

THE TERRORS OF THE LAST DAY.

† St. Mark continues to detail the order of this terrible hour. Terror will follow upon terror, curse upon curse, "till men will faint away with fear". The sun being not quite extinguished, a dismal gloom will be spread over all things like a veil over the face of the dead: terrific signs are seen in the heavens, and all things announce that time is at an end. St. John says that before God pronounces the final word there is silence in heaven: and voices are heard in the air, on the water, and on the earth. At length the skies open, and He pours out the first vial of His anger. And the end is come. God speaks the command, and all nature trembles as if in agony. The seas swell and boil, and rise and flash the skies. The mountains nod and sink, and the poles collapse. The lightnings flash, and the moaning tempests sweep over the furious deep piling up ocean upon ocean on the trembling globe. The earth reels in convulsion, and the whole frame of creation struggles. A mighty conflagration bursts from the melting earth, rages like a hurricane round about, devouring all things in its storm and flood of fire, consuming the crumbling wreck of the condemned world. The heavens become terrible as the kindling earth and seas show their overwhelming flashes on the crimson skies. The sun muffled, the moon black, the stars fallen, floating masses like clouds of blood sweep the skies in circling fury. The Omnipotence which, in the beginning of time, formed all creation, is now concentrated in a point; and, as it were, intensifies the infinity of His wrath, till anger can swell

no higher, and His voice is heard like thunder in the distance. With what eloquent terror does the Saviour paint this scene in His own words: "Men fainting away with fear, running in wild distraction, calling on the ground to open and swallow them, and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of the Lord". The earth on fire, the skies faded, the sun and the stars darkened or extinguished: mankind burning, dying: the angry voice of God coming to judge the world, and Jesus Christ describing the scene, are realities which the history of God has never seen before, and which never again will be repeated during the endless round of eternity.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

THE LAST DAY.

§ There was a time when there was no earth, no sun, no moon, no stars; when all the eye now beholds had no existence; when there was nothing; all darkness, chaos—when the Divinity reigned alone; when no created voice was heard through God's territories to break the silence of illimitable space. Six thousand years have only elapsed since He built the present world, and peopled the skies with the myriad spheres that hang in the arched roof above us. Th mere shell, the mere framework of this world, may, perhaps, be somewhat older; but we know when Adam was created with the certainty of a parish register. It may be about six thousand years ago; and since that period the history of man is one unbroken page of wickedness and infidelity. Heaven, once, in anger, nearly extirpated our race; and once, in mercy, forgave us. Yet since, the earth is stained with guilt, red as scarlet, and the patience of a God, patience infinite, can alone bear it. Who can tell the amount of the crime of even one city for one day? But who can conceive the infinite guilt of all peoples, of all stations, and all ages, ascending and accumulating before God's throne since the beginning? God is great in power, great in goodness, great in mercy, great in justice.

Reason asks: Oh, who is God? and what is nature? and whence is man? and where is Heaven? and why is hell? and what is our destiny? Was the world made in pleasure, moved for a moment in trial and suffering, and then to be blotted out in anger? In one revolution of the earth is it to become a blank? Like a burning ship at sea, sinking to the bottom on fire, is the earth to vanish into non-existence under the blue vault, where it once careered in its brilliant circle? Is not a vestige to remain of its omnipotent path? Is its wide

territory to be a tenantless, dark waste—the myriad lamps of the skies extinguished, all former existences crumbled, silent for ever, all chaos—things, as if they never had been—the history of Earth and Time a mere record of the forgotten past, a mere hollow vault in the infinitude of space?

Oh! how true in this place are the words “Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity except to love God and to serve Him alone”. Great and Almighty God, what a decree is this! Have all things come to this? Has all the past been a dream? what is futurity? is it like the past? where can the mind rest in this tempest of the soul? Foolish questions! God has arranged this condition of things. His sanctity, justice, power, wisdom, and truth, have arranged and executed this eternal decree. This is enough. We can no more change this order of things than put space in a nutshell, or destroy the being of God. God is His own master, and in His own free will He has arranged this multitudinous terror. But remember that in this desolation it is vice that troubles; virtue is secure, as God is just. In this terrible moment virtue smiles in happy repose on this second coming of Christ. Virtue is immortal; like a sunbeam on the battle-field, invulnerable in a shower of death, brilliant in the midst of carnage, and unsullied in the gore of the dead, the soul, by its immortal virtue, will shine in undying lustre in that terrific hour, amidst the shock of nature, the power of hell, and the crash of myriad worlds.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

CERTAINTY OF THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

|| When the day of general judgment will come, no mortal can tell: the highest Archangel round God's throne cannot know it: it is among the eternal secrets of His own mind. It is a future free act of His independent will; and no creature can unlock the depths of God's liberty. We resemble Him in our spiritual essence to a small extent; we know the past and the present, in our own limited circle of time. The Angelic essence knows the past and the present in a wider circle of knowledge; but no creature, however exalted, can know the future, unless God reveal it. Futurity can have no real existence, since it has not, as yet, commenced to exist. It is solemnly confined to the mind of God, the internal mind of God: and is therefore essentially beyond the reach of the highest creature. We only know that the terrible day of judgment will certainly arrive in some future revolving century. The same Almighty Word that called all things into being has spoken it: the same unerring testimony that built

Nature has described its future wreck. The feelings, the maddening agonies, the very words, of the burning inhabitants, are minutely detailed by the language of Christ Himself. The world, therefore, destroyed by future fire, under the anger of God, is as certain as any other past revealed fact published several centuries before the actual occurrence. The earth, therefore, burning in consuming conflagration under the angry breath of God's wrath, preparatory to the general Judgment and man's final doom, is a future fact which is now a mere matter of time. It is already written on the coming roll of the History of Heaven. When it will occur, creatures on the earth cannot plead the excuse of being taken by surprise. We had been warned of the drowning of the earth by the angry flood: and we saw it executed by overwhelming cataracts from Heaven. We were informed too, of the coming of the Messiah thousands of years in advance: and we saw Him. We heard the stroke of the hammer on Calvary; we heard Him cry, and we saw Him weep. In the present case we cannot be taken by surprise: we are already warned; the GREAT day is approaching, like those other events. But at what time, no creature can tell. It is folly to reason what He will do, judging from what He has done.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

¶ Then, on the Day of Judgment, the bodies of the Elect shall arise from the grave in this very flesh in which we are now trying to save our souls and serve God—in this very flesh we shall behold our Saviour, and enter into the joy of His kingdom. “And in my flesh I shall behold my God my Saviour”, says holy Job. Every delight, then, of which the human body is capable in its highest and most perfect form will be given to us. We shall arise in glory who were buried in humiliation, we shall arise in power who were sowed in weakness; the body that went down to the grave a corruptible body, liable and destined to fall into the most hideous form of corruption, will arise clothed in the spiritual glory and brightness of our Divine Lord, able to pass in an instant quick as thought, from one end of Heaven to the other, incapable of suffering any more; impassible, glorious, bright, spiritual, and active. Every sense in this glorified body of our's shall retain its capacity of delight. But the joy must be of the highest kind, in order to please the spiritualised sense. Just as now, my dear brothers, the music that would satisfy an uninstructed rude person would appear execrable.

to a trained and highly cultivated musician—just as a painting that would simply delight an ordinary poor person may appear a mere daub in the eyes of a great painter or connoisseur; so every sense of that risen body is brought to the very highest pitch of its natural perfection, and that which can give joy now to these senses must be spiritual and transcendent in its beauty and in its perfection; and therefore the joys of Heaven, to meet the requirement of the spiritualised sense, must be joy of the highest kind. The eye shall behold beauty that is nothing less than God, the ear shall be filled with the rushing harmony of song, out of a song sung by the angels of God; the spiritualised sense of touch shall be delighted into an ecstasy of joy at the very atmosphere of Heaven, for it is redolent of the breath of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O. P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How many of the sacraments can be received more than once?
2. What do you mean by the character imprinted on the soul by some of the Sacraments?
3. Why is Baptism most necessary for us?
4. Why is Penance most necessary?
5. For what purpose has Christ instituted the Sacraments?
6. Do we receive an increase of grace by means of the Sacraments?
7. Has it been decreed that we shall all die?
8. How do you show that our bodies shall rise on the Last Day?
9. How can bodies arise which long since have mouldered into dust?
10. Are we obliged to believe in the resurrection of the body?
11. Shall our bodies arise on the Last Day with all their defects?
12. What are the signs that shall announce the Last Day?
13. Shall every one arise at the sound of the last trumpet?
14. In what place shall the Last Judgment take place?
15. Shall there be on the Last Day, a record of the acts of our lives?

16. Shall a record of our good works be produced at the Judgment seat?

17. Why shall our bodies arise united to our souls?

18. In what manner shall the bodies of the Saints arise

19. What shall be the properties of the bodies of the Saints on the resurrection?

20. In what manner shall the bodies of the wicked arise?

PRACTICE.

1. Often think on death, on its consequences, on its uncertainty as to time, and on the danger of dying suddenly.

2. Firmly believe that on the Last Day your body will arise from the grave.

3. Often represent to yourself, from time to time, the beauty and brilliancy of the bodies of the Saints when arising from the dead.

PRAYER.

We shall all die! death will certainly knock at our doors! When shall we die? In what manner shall we die? These, O God! are the reflections which now occupy our minds, after the instructions we have received. We acknowledge, O Lord! that one day, and how soon we know not, we shall close our eyes on this life; and that when our bodies shall have for some time reposed in the grave, they shall arise and be again united to our souls, at the sound of the last trumpet. Grant, dear Jesus, that we may live here, so as to deserve, on the last day, the glorious privilege of arising with brilliant and glorified bodies. Amen.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ON THE LAST JUDGMENT AND HEIL.

Q In what manner will Christ come to judge us?

A. In the clouds of Heaven, with great power and majesty, and all the Angels with Him—*Matt.* xxiv. 25.

1. When all the children of Adam—an innumerable multitude of all nations, ages, and conditions—shall be standing together in the valley of Josaphat, without any distinction of rich or poor, great or little, master or servant, monarch or subject, Christ, the great judge, will make His appearance, and every one shall see Him, coming down “in the clouds of Heaven, with great power and majesty, and all the angels with Him”. Before Him shall be carried the royal standard of the cross, as St. Matthew tells us in these words: “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man”. That Cross shall shine brighter than the sun, and will be to the good a source of joy and happiness; but to the wicked it shall be a source of pain, anguish, and confusion, because it shall remind them of the great love of their Saviour, and of all the sufferings He endured for their salvation. St. Jerome says that on the Last Day the Cross will reproach the wicked for their ingratitude to Jesus, and for having abused His mercy, slighted His grace, and rendered void in their regard His passion and death, through their obstinacy in crime and guilt.

2. Oh, how different from His first coming shall this His second coming be! In His first coming.

He made His appearance in poverty and humility—He came clothed with infirmities. He came like a merciful Shepherd, in search of the straying sheep. At His second coming, He will assume the quality of an inflexible Judge, and descend from the right hand of His heavenly Father, to pass that everlasting sentence, which will assign to the just a never-fading crown of glory, but shall consign to eternal flames the unfortunate sinner who had forgotten his Creator and his God. The Judge, having now come down from Heaven in “great power and majesty”, takes His seat on the clouds, with all the Angels around Him. And, oh ! what terror shall then seize the heart of the sinner ! What distraction of mind, what agony shall he then feel, to see himself on the point of being condemned by that God, who died for the salvation of men ! Oh ! does not the very thought of it, dear children, amaze and alarm you ? The thought of being damned, is indeed dreadful, but to think that we are to be damned by the Saviour of the world, is what we can scarcely endure.

Q. As every one is judged immediately after death, what need is there of a general judgment ?

A. That the Providence of God, which often here permits the good to suffer, and the wicked to prosper, may appear just before all men.

3. Immediately after death every one is judged ; for, no sooner has the soul been separated from the body, than it is presented at the tribunal of its Judge, and there stands alone with God alone : Heaven on one side, Hell on the other, and the judgment-seat of God between both. An instant will decide its everlasting lot for an eternity ; for, as soon as the soul appears before God, it is at once judged. But

besides this particular Judgment, there is, as you have already been told, a "general judgment". But why has God chosen to hold this general Judgment of all the sons of men, when every one is judged immediately after death? If the soul, on her departure from the body, is immediately judged, and, according to her works, is destined either to eternal punishment, or eternal happiness, why then a general Judgment? The answer is, "that the Providence of God, which often here permits the good to suffer, and the wicked to prosper, may appear just before all men".

4. In this life, the Almighty and Eternal God maketh the sun to shine on the unjust as well as on the just without any distinction. In th life, God visits the good with adversity and affliction; He suffers pious and faithful Christians to pine in misery and want, and feel all the anguish of destitution and distress; whilst He "permits the wicked to prosper", and the greatest sinners to enjoy all the comforts and delights of this world. And, because we see the good suffer, and the wicked prosper in this world, we are inclined to question the justice of God, and the arrangements of His Providence. The poor, but just man, who sees himself in want of even the necessities of life, and is looking at his children suffering the pangs of hunger, is tempted to arraign Providence, to fly in the face of God, to exclaim against Heaven, and ask, where now is the justice of God? At seeing many around him, who, though wicked and irreligious, are in the enjoyment of the good things of this world, he may be tempted to ask, where now is the Providence of God, that rules everything? If God be just, why does He permit the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper?*

5. But, on the day of "general Judgment", God will make His Providence appear just; and will, by

the sentence will. h He shall pass, prove to all, that in the arrangements of that Providence in this life, everything was ruled by Him with strict justice. On the day of "general Judgment", the poor and miserable of this world, because they had been patient and resigned to God's will, shall be sentenced to eternal happiness; whilst the rich and powerful of this world, because they had been disobedient to the commands of God, shall receive a sentence of eternal reprobation.

6. Besides the reason just mentioned for the necessity of a "general Judgment", there are others. A general Judgment is necessary, that the good may be separated from the wicked, and that the one may be rewarded, and the other condemned publicly, in the face of all men. A general Judgment is also necessary, to increase the glory of the elect, and the confusion of the reprobate, in proportion to their respective good and evil works; because it is only on that day that, stripped of all disguise, the character of every one shall be clearly laid open to public view. On that day, the good man, who performed acts of charity in secret, shall be known to all such as he really was. On that day, the false friend shall be detected, the concealed slanderer and detractor exposed, the secret adulterer, the treacherous enemy, the hypocritical pretender, be all brought to light. Again, a general Judgment is necessary, that the bodies of the just and the wicked may receive their sentence, and "that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil", as the Apostle says in his second Epistle to the Corinthians; for the justice of God requires that the bodies should be judged as well as the souls, that they may be sharers either of eternal glory or of eternal punishment, according as they have been instruments of virtue or instru-

ments of vice in this life. These are the reasons, dear children, that there is "need of a general Judgment", though "every one is judged immediately after death".†

Q. What will Christ say to the good on the last day?

A. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you"—*Matt. xxv. 34.*

4. Christ being seated on His glorious throne aloft in the air, attended with all His millions of millions of Angels, shall at once issue His command for the final and eternal separation of the good from the bad. Then it will be that the tares shall be separated from the wheat, the chaff from the corn, the wicked from the just. A sad separation will that indeed be! The father shall be separated from the embraces of the child, the mother shall be taken from the daughter, the brother from the sister, the husband from the wife, the friend from the bosom of his friend. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, shall on the Last Day be separated; and that separation shall be not only for a week, or a month, or a year, but for endless ages, as long as God shall be God! Then it will be that, according to St. Matthew, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats", after which those two companies shall never, never more meet! When in this life we lose a dear parent, child, or friend, we are consoled in some way by the hope that we shall again meet him in Heaven; but the separation on the Last Day shall be eternal—there shall never be again a hope of ever meeting more.

5. When the separation of the good and bad has taken place—the sheep on the right hand of the

Judge, and the goats on the left—Christ, turning to those on His right, addresses them in words that bring joy and happiness to their souls. He smiles upon them smiles of happiness. He pours into their soul with profusion the torrent of His delights. O dear children, what are the transports of these blessed souls! Already are their labours abundantly repaid. For, imagine, if you can, what it is to behold the face of God—to behold that face looking with complacency on you—to behold the gates of Heaven expanded before you—to behold the innumerable multitude of Angels, your future companions, looking upon you with looks of love, and with extended arms and expanded wings, ready to bear you up to the mansions of Heaven!

9. But the moment is come. Their loving Saviour, in an affectionate and stooping posture, stretches out His arms towards them, and after a glorious rehearsal of all their good works: "Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Come from this valley of tears, where you have long mourned, and enter your Heavenly country, where tears shall be no more, and where your grief shall be turned into joy. Come from a land of banishment to your true country, from your mortal pilgrimage, in the midst of crosses, labours, conflicts, and dangers, to your blessed and happy home, in the fair and lovely mansions of rest and peace, in the eternal Sion. Come, no longer to carry your cross of disappointment and of affliction, but to receive the rewards of your patience and of your labours: "Arise, my beloved, the winter is now past, the floods and storms are all over". Arise and come—come, enter the joy of thy Lord, and "possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Oh! what

songs of exultation and triumph shall instantly burst from the lips of that glorious assembly! O dear children, may we be of the number, who shall hear this blessed invitation of our Lord!

Q. What will Christ say to the wicked on the last day?

A. "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels — *Matt. xxv. 41.*

10. After having invited the just to His glorious kingdom, Christ will turn to the wicked on His left hand, and with alarm and terror in His countenance, shall pronounce against them the dreadful sentence of their irrevocable doom, every word of which will make the whole valley of Josaphat ring with shrieks, groans, and lamentations. "Depart from Me, ye accursed", He will say, "into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels". "Depart from Me", your God and your Creator, whom you have so often and so grievously offended—"depart from Me", your Father and your most bountiful Benefactor, whom you have so basely despised.— "Depart from Me", your Jesus and your Redeemer, whose blood you have so often trampled upon. Depart, begone for ever from Me—far from the joys of My kingdom and the society of My children. "Depart from Me, ye accursed", are the words of the Sovereign Judge, as if He should say, you shall go from Me, but tak my curse along with you. I would have given you My blessing, but you would not receive it; a curse you have chosen, and a curse shall be your everlasting inheritance. A curse upon your eyes, never to see the least glimpse of light—a curse upon your ears, to hear no other sounds, for all

eternity, but frightful shrieks and groans—a curse on your taste, to be ever embittered with gall—a curse on your smell, to be always tormented with the intolerable stench of the bottomless abyss—a curse on your feeling, and on all the members of your body, to be for ever burning in a fire that shall never be quenched! “Go, ye accursed”; you forsook Me during life—the health and strength I gave you, you abused to insult Me—I now abandon you, and for evermore, to be the objects of My wrath, of My malediction, of My everlasting hatred.‡

11. “Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels”; begone for ever from Me, far from the joys of My kingdom and the society of my children, into that place you have chosen, “into everlasting fire”, into the dark dungeons of Hell, “which were prepared for the devil and his angels”, whom you have served during life, and whose part you have taken against Me. Oh! the dismal yells that shall instantly break forth from the mouths of those millions of wretched beings! Oh! the horrid shrieks that shall resound on every side. Oh! the bitterness and anguish of despair which the poor wretched souls shall then feel at the sight of the bottomless abyss, of the burning lake of fire and brimstone into which they are about to be cast, and from which there is no redemption!

12. And when Jesus shall show them those sacred hands and feet, which were pierced for their salvation—that gaping wound from which issued forth streams of blood to cleanse and purify their souls—their despair shall be such as we cannot find words to express. At the sight of the wounds of Jesus, the sinner shall cry out: I might have been saved, might easily have been saved! for He who is now my Judge, and a Judge so terrible, once shed His

blood for me, and by His death purchased for me a place among those who are now to reign with Him for ever; but, wretch that I am, I am now to be condemned, accursed by the Saviour of men! But will not He who shed His blood for them have pity on them? No; He it is who has pronounced their eternal doom. Will not Mary, the mother of sinners, lend a mother's ear? No; she and all creation raise their voice and ratify the sentence: "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgments right". §

13. Oh, how earnestly will the condemned souls wish for one of those many days now misspent; and how profitably would they now employ, if it were in their power, the hour granted for repentance. But the hour of repentance is now passed, never—never to return. Their lot is now finally decided—the last sentence is pronounced,—their condemnation is without appeal, and they are in a moment to be plunged into the bottomless pit of everlasting fire, and banished for ever from the light of Heaven into utter darkness, loaded with the curse of God: "Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire". Beneath their feet, Hell is opened to receive them,—above their heads, they behold the wrathful countenance of an angry God,—around are legions of infernal furies, of merciless devils, only awaiting the signal to snatch them away, and bury for ever their souls and bodies in the dismal dungeon and fiery furnace of Hell.||

Q, Where must the wicked go on the Last Day?

A. They shall go, both body and soul, into everlasting punishment.

14. No sooner has the sentence been pronounced by Jesus Christ, condemning the wicked to the

eternal flames of Hell, than the devils seize on them. The earth opens, they sink—they disappear. The sound of their shrieks becomes fainter in proportion as they advance into the abyss; their cries are to be heard no longer; the earth closes, and they descend, “both body and soul, into everlasting punishment”. For what purpose? To burn there in the company of the devil and his associates. How long? For millions and millions of ages, as long as God will be God; and during that endless eternity, they shall never know ease or repose, nor shall they ever have any hope of release from that fiery abyss. They shall be for ever deprived of the light of God; they shall for ever be excluded from the glory of Heaven. Everlasting punishment shall they suffer; they shall burn for ever in the midst of Hell’s flames, and the flames which devour them shall never go out. The damned will for ever send forth their cries, groans, and sighs, and God will never be moved by their tears and supplications. The wicked will for ever lift up their eyes, but they shall not see God; they shall for ever send forth sighs, but Jesus shall not hear them; they shall call upon their Creator and Redeemer, but shall never find relief. They shall be eternally penetrated with fire, eternally torn with remorse, eternally gnawed by a worm that is never to die: “Their worm shall never die, and their fire shall never be extinguished”—*Mark, ix.*

15. Oh, it is then that their thoughts shall roll back on their former companions, ~~aved~~, perhaps, with greater temptations and fewer ~~aces~~ races. Often will they call to mind the bloody scene of Calvary; often will the image of their Redeemer shoot across their frenzied minds, and harrow up their inmost soul. I have been redeemed by the blood of Incarnate God, the damned one shall say, and now I am eter-

nally lost—I am damned, and might have been so easily saved! Oh, had I given myself in earnest to God, which His graces so often and so kindly invited me to do, how much more happily would I have lived, and how different would have been my fate now! Oh, if even one hour were now allowed me for repentance; but the hour of repentance is past —“out of hell there is no redemption”. Then the damned one will break out into curses and imprecations: cursed be the power that created me! cursed be the mercy that redeemed me! cursed be the day on which I first saw the light! cursed be the air I breathed; cursed be the mother that bore me! cursed be God, and cursed be man! Oh, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of God! ¶

Q. Where will the just go on the Last Day?

A. The just will enter, with glorious and immortal bodies, in o life everlasting.—*Matt.* xxv. 46.

16. When, dear children, Jesus Christ shall address the just in these words: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the kingdom of Heaven prepared for you”, they shall at once ascend to Heaven. No sooner are the words pronounced, than the Son of Man begins to ascend; the Angels follow, and with them the just mount up and enter with glorious and immortal bodies “into life everlasting”. Their bodies are not now gross, heavy, carnal, subject to disease and death, as they had been in this life, but they are brilliant, glowing, transparent, pure, agile, and evermore incapable of infirmity and death. With these bodies, glowing with brightness, they enter the gates of Heaven, and are put in possession of “life everlasting”.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MANNER IN WHICH CHRIST WILL COME TO JUDGE US.

* Scarcely has the earth been consumed and the living population destroyed, when Michael the Archangel sounds his loud trumpet, calling all the dead to judgment. He summons all hell to attend, and commands all Heaven to appear and witness this last act of God at the close of the creation. At his shrill summons the bottomless pit opens, and all those who had been lost since the beginning of the world come forth from their fiery prisons. The unhappy of all nations and ages come forth in one mighty mass, driven forward in rending agony to the place of judgment, their wild lamentations swelling as they advance, like the moaning of a tempest on their wild and burning lakes. As creation has been destroyed or faded, this terrific assemblage are in darkness, while they move on in despair, in dreadful expectation of the coming of the Lord. As the Saviour approaches, golden light appears; the voice of a mighty host is heard from Heaven: like the opening of the morning heretofore in the East, every moment becomes more and more brilliant, till the full day of Eternity opens out in all its gorgeous splendour, revealing Christ, surrounded by His entire court, angels and saints, and seated in majesty, as He has Himself foretold, in the clouds. Angels and Archangels, and Cherubim and Seraphim, and Powers and Principalities appear on outspread wings, the first of the countless host. Then all the Saints of the old law, the Patriarchs, the Prophets, all who for forty generations lived and died in the belief of the Redeemer to come. Then all the Saints of the new era, who participated in Christ's atonement, the twelve Apostles, all the Martyrs, all the Confessors, all the Virgins, all the religious of every clime and colour, who in every age bore testimony or died in attestation of their faith. Then all the poor of every country, who, in their trials and sufferings, their silent afflictions, and broken hearts, never forgot their duty to God: all, all appear crowned with glory, and clothed in the sunlight robes of Heaven. Lastly, in the vast train of happy creatures, comes Mary, the Mother of God, with twelve stars upon her head, the moon beneath her feet. The Blessed Virgin sits at the feet of her Son, Jesus; while He, with the cross in His hand, lifted high above all heaven, appears, in the triumph of His second coming, seated in the clouds. In

the two pictures now before us, read the entire history of God and Satan; the opposite views of sin and redemption. Now is the time to reason on our own condition, and to reflect well on the truths of Religion, the eternal value of faith, and the imperishable justice of God. This is the day in which Christ shall receive compensation before God and man for the injuries he has received, when oppressed virtue shall be rewarded, and when triumphant vice shall be branded with perdition.—*Dr. Cahill.*

PROVIDENCE OF GOD JUSTIFIED IN THE LAST JUDGMENT.

† Oh, when Judas betrayed Christ, when the soldiers mocked Him, is it not surprising how the Angels could have borne those iniquities? And when Pilate asked the Jewish mob which did they prefer, Barrabas or Christ, they all exclaimed “Barrabas”; and then they said, “Let His blood be upon us and on our children”. Who can conceive how the Archangels did not beg of God to annihilate the whole race of men? But the mystery of the Cross had a different object, and hence this day is the time for human punishment. See the millions of saved souls that now stand in triumph round the Cross, all of whom He has saved by His humiliations, debasement, and death. These are the triumphs by which He has conquered Satan, disarmed Almighty vengeance, and peopled Heaven with countless hosts of Saints that accompany Him in His second coming to-day. A glance by anticipation at this terrible hour will teach more Gospel truth and more deceit of this world, than could be taught by any other letter of instruction. When in the world we see the starving and naked poor crawling through the deserted lanes, living or rather dying, in the putrid hovels of disease, while the abandoned profligate lives in riotous prosperity, the corrupter of youth, jibing death and mocking judgment—one will ask is there a God to look on quietly at this galling starvation on one hand, and this scarlet iniquity on the other? He will ask is there no God to relieve the pitiful cries of the one, and punish the scalding extravagance of the other? Again, when one sees the pious, devoted child of God spending a long weary life in poverty and sickness, in trial, in disappointment, and yet in devotion to God, without a day, a moment of neglect or dissipation, while the blasphemer or infidel stands at God’s own gates insulting Him on His own throne and teaching perdition within His reach—one will ask has God no feeling for religion, no zeal for the human soul, to perpetrate this outrage on Himself, this scandal on the Gospel.

this bleeding corruption on the morals and faith of the public? How can God free Himself in these circumstances from being the abetter of infidelity and the encourager of blasphemy? There must be a day for Christ to receive compensation, for God the Father to defend Himself: for virtue to be recorded, and for vice to be punished in the presence of congregated mankind. If this great day did not come, the Gospel might be said to be a dumb mockery of justice; the punishment of Hell without a judge or a sentence; the rewards of Heaven without examination or a verdict. The whole character of God, therefore, demands that His strictest justice to Christ and to virtue shall be made known; while the same eternal character of the same justice requires that the deceit, the ingratitude, the blasphemy, and the infidelity of the wicked, shall be weighed in the impartial scales of God's truth, and after the renewal of their former condemnation, plunged in the presence of Heaven and Hell into eternal fire.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

NECESSITY OF A GENERAL JUDGMENT.

† The Scriptures of God tell us of two distinct judgments. The first is that which takes place on the death of every child of Adam, be he saint or sinner, when he stands alone before the tribunal of God, confronted with his own thoughts, his own words, his own actions, performed, or thought, or spoken by himself personally during the brief span of his mortal career, and according to which his fate for all eternity for weal or woe is decided. But independent of and in addition to this first final judgment there is the universal judgment, which will close the history of this world, and of all time, and which will be the opening chapter of the history of eternity. Now, if we consider how completely God Almighty does His work in regard to every individual amongst us, that He will not allow a single deliberate thought of our minds, a single word fallen from our lips, a single act of our hearts to escape his judgment, that He will take a poor, solitary, trembling, helpless soul that stands before Him, that He will take it to task, searching with such a glance as the eye of God alone can give—clear, judicial, stern, comprehensive—every single thought, word, and act of that poor soul's previous existence. When we consider this, and that this will extend to every single individual that ever was born into this world, we may ask ourselves, then, where is the necessity or what is the reason for the universal judgment which God will pass not merely upon the

individuals who compose the vast throng that shall assemble around the great white throne when the grave shall open and give up its dead; when the sea shall render from out its hidden depths all who lie dead there; when hell itself will yield up its dead, that they may stand for a moment living before the face of God, to be damned and withered by the voice of His anger and the glance of His indignation; when, on the other hand, other graves will open, and the dead will arise with joyful eyes and changed and glorified bodies transformed and wrapt from one into another form of glory, with the grace of God on them, and that grace changed into glory, with hope eternal secured to them for ever—joyful bodies rising from the grave to meet the joyful souls that will come down from their place of glory to reanimate them once more, that in all the integrity of his being the glorified man may live for his God; and just and unjust, saint and sinner alike, shall be summoned by the blast of the angel's trumpet to come and confront their God in His last final judgment.

But besides the individual life which every man amongst us leads, there is a national and social, a literary and intellectual, a spiritual, but a public life, throughout which the world leads as human society and as formed into nations. Do we not know that history itself—the record of our race—deals far more with the life of nations and races than with the mere life of individuals? Do we not know that the public action of this world is determined and carried on far more by the action of nations than of individuals? Have not the nations a public conscience—are they not responsible for every episode of the public life as well as the individual? Ah! certainly; and therefore, besides the judgment which awaits the individual personal man, in which he has to render an account of himself to God, there is the other more terrible judgment that awaits the world as a whole—that awaits society, that awaits nations as nations—and it is necessary that such a judgment should be public, most solemn and full.

This is one among many reasons which might be and are adduced by the philosophers and holy fathers of the Catholic Church, to vindicate God in His action of a universal judgment; and it is the only one I select—first, because it bears in a special manner upon the circumstances of the age in which we live; and secondly, because it bears upon the charity to which I am asking you to contribute to-day, as we shall see. First, then, I lay down this principle—nations have their own life, society has its own obligations as a whole,

nations have their own consciences, they are bound to accept the faith of Jesus Christ, they are bound to conform their lives as a society to the faith, they are bound to form and enact their laws and to shape their legislation according to the immortal, eternal, imperishable dictates of the faith; and if they give up the faith, if they turn their backs upon God in their legislative assemblies, if their public action, if their armies in the field, if they make war against the Christ and His anointed, then they are guilty of a national and a public sin, a shame, a scandal, and a ruin to the moral as well as the spiritual civilisation of Society.

Has the world ever committed this sin, dearly beloved, or will there be any indictment against the nations on that day when the Son of Man will come in all the terrors of His public and universal judgment? I answer in the words of the Gospel. All men shall be assembled, all those whom the world ever knew, all those historical names that have come down to us upon the stream of history as of men who formed the destinies of the world, all those philosophers who invented the various systems of thought that have guided the mind of man, all those scientists who with genius and most scientific glance, have penetrated through the mysteries of nature, opened up the resources of this material world, commanded the lightning, sounded the sea, weighed the air, and left behind them an imperishable name—all those kings and emperors who waged wars, just or unjust—above all, all those peoples or societies or nations who in one period or another of their history turned against the Church of God—the one infallible witness and organ of the Word of God—they shall all stand before God to answer for their public, their national, their social, their intellectual, and their spiritual life. What indictment will be had against them? Ah! the Lord Himself has said: the words that come from the lips of Christ are—"In that day all the tribes of man shall come". Please observe His word. He no longer talks of individuals. He speaks of tribes of man, the societies in which they have formed themselves, the nations which have begun to live, their public and national life, and He tells them they shall all assemble in the day when their public and historical life comes before the world on the one side, and God and His angels on the other.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

JESUS CHRIST SPEAKS TO THE CONDEMNED.

§ No change! The kingdom of hell is as well founded as the kingdom of Heaven—one is founded on My power and

My mercy: the other is founded on My power and My anger: and I am as much God in punishing vice as rewarding virtue. You mistake the Trinity: We did not make or create ourselves: We are the living essence of things: essential first beings, loving living virtues, and hating living vice: We are the essence of life: We cannot die: you mistake Us: every mortal sin, unatoned, unrepented, is fixed in permanent malice: it burns for ever like a lake of pitch, and must remain eternally unextinguished: and an act of meritorious virtue is, on the other hand, as irremovable in glory as the pillars of the throne of God, and must last for ever; you mistake Us, and you mistake yourselves. This is the first day of eternity to you—time is past—everything will now wear a different appearance—eternity is so large, and time is so small, that the death of Adam, the first man, and the death of the last man here to-day, are *two points* so close, that they seem to *touch*: your crimes will now surprise yourselves; the sanctity of God will astound you; sin will appear under new terrors; and heaven will look happier than your fancy had ever painted it—everything will now appear in its true colours. You have oppressed and killed the poor: you have corrupted the innocent, and you have filled hell with the victims of your lust; your scandals have blasted faith and converted the Gospel into shame; you have dared the Trinity at Our own gates: you jibed death, defied hell, and mocked Heaven; My blood is thick on your scarlet hands; your damnation is fixed; your tempestuous bed is made in hell, and you are doomed to writhe in eternal fire. I lived for you; I died for you; I watched you, once My own child, to save you; the Saints, the Angels followed you to the gates of hell, to intercept you and to gain your soul; you resisted all, and damned yourself, in spite of the prayers of the living, the cries of the Saints, and the burning petition of the Saviour of the world; the happy fields of Paradise now lie before you for the last time: but you shall never again behold them; the million suns that burn on the eternal hills shall never again shed their lustre on you; the peace, and joys, and glory of Heaven you shall never taste; the companions of your youth whom you loved shall never see you; and you shall be cast away from God as far as Omnipotent anger can throw you. Reprobate souls, darkness and torture are now your eternal lot: and when the gates of your fiery prisons shall close for ever between you and Me, storms shall rage over lakes and oceans of fire and brimstone, where the consuming waves shall never reach the shore, and where one ray of light shall never burst through the infinite chaos that lies between you and Me.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

THE TERRORS OF HELL.

THE SINNERS REPROACHED BY GOD.

¶ See all the Anchorets that surround me here. They had the same flesh and blood as you.—They are saved. You never asked for the grace of resistance. The burning of a city is but a feeble illustration of the unrestrained, resistless flames of the passions of your untamed heart. Fearing you had not sufficient inflammable material to spread the conflagration, of yourself, you have purchased all the fuel which could inflame to fury the inextinguishable passions, which are only exceeded in extent and intensity by the boiling cauldron in which the reprobates are buried in eternal torment. There was nothing that could encourage, flatter, foment human passion, which you did not purchase, by land and sea, to increase your guilt and to swell the anger of God.

You must remember that I was spit upon, mocked, blindfolded, bruised for you—flogged for you. The stroke of the hammer on Calvary as heard in Heaven, as they nailed Me to the cross. You cannot forget it was for you I died. I called to My Father for relief in My agony. No! no! no! was the reply I heard through the closed gates of Heaven. You were among the number that put me to death: yet I held my arms open for your forgiveness till your last breath. And your greatest crime during your whole life is your present daring declaration that you did not know your guilt was so great, although I saw you in Jerusalem; I had my eyes fixed on you in the hall of Pilate; I saw you at the pillar—you held the scourge. It was you that fitted the nails to My hands and feet, plunged the spear in My side, and jibed and mocked Me as My last breath was escaping from my quivering lip. You shall soon see Me on My Throne of judgment, passing sentence on your scarlet crimes, while hell moans and Heaven weeps at the terrors of My anger.—*Rev. Dr. Cahill.*

THE TERRORS AND SUFFERINGS OF HELL.

¶ Let us now turn to hell. It is fearful to think upon the union of God's power, wisdom, and justice in producing this world of punishment, this wonderful, mysterious, and terrific part of the creation, which is in its desolate mysteries as much beyond our conception, as the joys of Heaven are in their resplendency.

The life in hell is a life from which there is a total absence of sympathy and love. This is an easy thing to say; but it is not so easy to penetrate into its significance. The

mind loses itself when it attempts to traverse an interminable desert—eternity, where no flowers of love, nor even their similitude, can grow. Shall a kind voice never speak to us more? Shall a kind eye never look at us again? Shall even the hearts of the blessed in Heaven, who loved us once with such surpassing tenderness, only beat the more happily because the justice of God is done upon us, forlorn, impenitent offenders? Who can live without love? I know not: I cannot think how it can be; but I know that we must live without it there. Nay, more than this: hatred will be all around us. Every lost soul, every lost demon, will hate us—hate us individually with a concentration of rage and hatred which it is terrible to think of. There is something insupportable in being hated—something maddening. Even when we are hated, though few men are really hated with a genuine hatred, by only one man, and unjustly, and with love all around us, coming in from every point of the compass, see how we run to God, and cling to Him, that He may make up to us what we are suffering, and take our part as a just Father against an unjust brother.

The life in hell is also a life of terror. Fear may be reckoned as one of the greatest tortures to which nature can be submitted. It “betrays the succours of reason”, without bringing also the unconsciousness of insanity. It is hard to say whether the visible approach of some great evil, or the agony of an uncertain evil, or the distracted fright of a present evil, may be considered as the worst to bear. Ordinarily speaking, life is not greatly tortured by fear. It is, for the most part, but an occasional visitant, and an extremely transient one. Yet, how its visits burn themselves in upon the memory as unforgotten dates. If we were awakened at midnight in our houses, and held by strong men in the lone darkness, while their accomplices were murdering before our eyes some one whom we loved most tenderly, how terrible, how desperate would the torture be! Our reason would not be unlikely to give way. The agonizing moan, the wild, enquiring eye so glazingly fixed upon us, the pale, contracted face of the sufferer, the fiendlike gestures of the murderers, and the staring red stain everywhere—these would haunt us all through life; yet, I suppose, the sight of the hideous wickedness of hell must be incomparably more horrible than this.

This is terrible: but to this you must add the mental agonies of hell. Our whole nature, keen, sensitive, immortal as it has become, will be saturated with fear. Its very pulses will be startings and quakings of horror, horror never removed.

but ever new, to which we never grow accustomed, but which will strangely magnify itself to all eternity. We can only picture our feelings by comparing them to the torture of a suffocated scream, when we fear to betray ourselves, or to a terrified death-bed, without death coming. One feature to hell will enable us to bring this home to ourselves. We shall be in the hands of devils, quailing under the cruel manipulation of those hideous, incorporeal, shapeless, formless, gigantic spirits. They will do what they will with us. It is their office to distress, to rack, to torture us with a vindictive cruelty and a demoniacal skill, of which we can form no conception. Mighty creatures! and yet their magnitude, their fury, their oppressive, fiery natures cannot crush the wretched life out of us—their trembling, awe-struck victims. To be thrown down amidst a herd of wild horses, to be confined for a night with an unchained frenzied murderer in his condemned cell, to be locked in, bound hand and foot, amidst a crowded ward of howling maniacs, all loose and free—what light and easy endurance these would be, compared with those wild panics of terror in hell, a terror which can neither escape, nor hide itself, nor die. It is a life also without vicissitudes. No Angel ever wings his way thither on an errand of consolation. All the united eloquence of hell could not bring one drop of water from earth's thousand fountains to cool the torture for one lightning's flash of time. Yet this is the bright side of hell! How little the words sound; yet it is not bitterness which prompts them, but the intense fear which pierces through me like splinters of ice at this moment. This is hell, with the hell left out, the crowning woe, the loss of God. This is hell, without the fire and the brimstone and the darkness, and the discordant noises, and the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Could we persistently meditate on all this, and still be what we are? Are we quite clear this will not be our eternal destiny?—*Father Faber.*

THE VISION OF HELL.

* * "A certain man", says Ven. Bede, "fell sick and had a frightful vision during the night. Next morning early he suddenly awoke, and sat up. He told the people what he had seen. "I was led", he said, "into a dark place. When I came into it, the darkness grew so thick that I could see nothing but the form of him who led me. I saw a great many balls of black fire rising up out of a deep pit and falling back again. I saw that there were souls shut up in these balls of fire. The smell which came out of the pit was unbearable. He who led me

into this place went away. So I stood there in great fright, not knowing what to do. All at once I heard behind me voices crying and lamenting most fearfully. I heard other voices mocking and laughing. These voices came nearer and nearer to me, and grew louder and louder. Then I saw that those who were laughing and rejoicing were devils. These devils dragged along with them souls of men, howling and lamenting. Amongst them I saw a man and a woman. The devils dragged these souls down into the burning pit. When they had gone deep down into the pit, I could not hear their voices so well. After a while some of those dark spirits came up again from the flaming pit. They ran forward and came round me. I was terribly frightened by their flaming eyes, and the filthy flame which came out of their mouths and nostrils. They seemed as if they would lay hold of me with burning tongues which they held in their hands. I looked around me for help. Just then I saw something like a star shining in the darkness. The light came from him who had brought me into this place. When he came near, the devils went away. Then he said: That fiery, stinking pit which you saw is the mouth of Hell, and whosoever goes into it shall never come out again. Go back to your body, and live among men again. Examine your actions well, and speak and behave so that you may be with the blessed in heaven. When he had said this, on a sudden I found myself alive again amongst men".—*Ven. Bede.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How shall Christ make His appearance when He is about to judge us?
2. Shall Christ's second coming be different from His first?
3. Together with a general Judgment, is there a particular one after death?
4. Are we ever tempted to call in question the justice of God in His arrangements here below?
5. Will the Providence of God appear just at the Last Judgment?
6. Can you assign other reasons for the necessity of a general Judgment?
7. Shall there be made a separation of the good and bad on the Last Day?

8. Will the souls of the saints rejoice at seeing Jesus about to address them?
 9. In what manner shall Jesus address the souls of the just?
 10. In what manner will Christ address the wicked on the Last Day?
 11. Shall Jesus condemn the wicked to the dark dungeons of Hell?
 12. What shall the wicked say at the sight of the wounds of Jesus?
 13. Can there be any repentance for sin on the Last Day?
 14. Shall the wicked be condemned on the Last Day to the eternal torments of Hell?
 15. Shall the thought of the love of Jesus torment the soul in Hell?
 16. With what bodies shall the just enter life everlasting?
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PRACTICE.

1. Think often on the last judgment, and on the account which you must then give of all your thoughts, words, and actions.
2. When you are tempted to sin, imagine that you hear the sentence of God condemning the wicked to Hell.
3. Faithfully observe God's commandments here, and on the last day you will receive from your Judge the sentence of the just.

PRAYER.

We have now, O Lord, pondered on the terrors of the last day, and fixed our thoughts on Thy coming in the clouds of Heaven to pass judgment on us. We are alarmed at the strict account we shall have to render Thee of all our thoughts, words, and actions, and the thunder of the last sentence makes us fear and tremble. O Jesus! grant that we may serve and love Thee faithfully in this life, so as to avert, on the Last Day, the dreadful sentence of the wicked, and to hear the consoling invitation addressed to the just: Come, you blessed of My Father. Amen.

CHAPTER XLV.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

Q. What means life everlasting ?

A. It means, that if we serve God faithfully in this life, we shall be happy with Him for ever in Heaven.

1. "Life everlasting" means, that if, during the few years we spend in this life, "we serve God faithfully", and love Him, and willingly take up His work, and with a good heart go through it, we shall be seated by Him in those places prepared for us in His glorious kingdom. "Life everlasting" means that if we faithfully comply here with the Commandments of God, by avoiding evil and doing good, if we be patient under trials and sufferings, if we be submissive to God's holy will, we shall one day enter the city of the heavenly Sion, be made partakers of the blessed Jerusalem, be for ever associated with the bands of martyrs, confessors, virgins, and with them shall for ever sing hymns of joy, praise, and thanksgiving to our Creator and our God.

2. When the young man mentioned in the Gospel, asked our Lord, what was he to do in order to gain "life everlasting", Jesus answered, saying: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments". So, too, dear children, it shall be with us. If we observe God's commandments, and are resolved to make any sacrifice sooner than to violate them, if we serve God faithfully by practising what He commands, we shall one day enter life everlasting, and "shall be happy with Him for ever in Heaven".

3. Oh! the life in the world to come:—a happy, secure, quiet life—a pure and holy life—a life which shall fear no death, nor dread no sorrow—a life free from pain, uneasiness, anxiety—a life where there is no enemy to assault us, no sin to seduce us, no fear to alarm us. When we have thrown off this body of clay, and when our immortal spirit shall ascend to that blessed, glorious, and never-ending kingdom, and when it shall look, for the first time, on that happy, heavenly city, what a thrill of delight shall seize on it! The soul looks around—here are the walls of precious stones—there the gates of beauteous pearl—along are the streets of the purest gold, and all around in every direction are seen its illustrious inhabitants—angels and saints, and the Almighty Sovereign enthroned in splendour and majesty in the midst of all.*

4. Here the soul beholds the harmonious choirs of angels—there the band of prophets, whom the Spirit of God filled with the knowledge of future events—there the twelve first preachers of the Christian religion, the blessed apostles—there the victorious army of innumerable martyrs—there the sacred assembly of confessors—there the tried and perfect monks and religious—there the holy women who overcame the pleasures of the world and the weakness of their sex—there the virgins and youths, who surpassed their years by their virtues and sanctity—there the poor who suffered patiently the toils of this life—there all rejoice in their proper mansions, and though the degree of glory in each is different, yet the joy of all is common, and shall be so for eternity. Oh! dear children, what a happy day that shall be to you if you have loved and served God here—what a day that shall be, which shall shine over your heads, when finishing the course of this life, you shall pass from death to immortality, and

that in the inevitable moment when others shall begin to tremble, you shall begin to walk joyfully, because you shall perceive the hour of your redemption to draw nigh. When your poor wretched body is dissolved, the celestial and melodious hymns which are sung by the Saints and Angels in praise of their eternal King, shall sound sweetly on your ears.

Q. What is the happiness of Heaven?

A. To see, love, and enjoy God, in the kingdom of His glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

5. The Scripture, to accommodate itself to our way of thinking, describes the glory and beauty of Heaven, by representing it under the figures of those things which are valued and admired in this world. St. John, in the Apocalypse, tells us, that the walls of the heavenly city are built with precious stones, its streets are pure and transparent gold, its water is the river of life, clearer than crystal, and flowing on for ever and ever. On the banks of this river, on either side, grows the tree of life, and the light of this city is such that it needs neither sun nor moon, for God Himself shall be its light for ever. He tells us also, that no heat, no cold, no rain, no storm, no diseases, no pains, no conflicts, no adversities of any kind, have any access to this city, or can ever come near this blessed abode; but a most bright day, a most serene calm, an everlasting peace perpetually reign there: "There is the tabernacle of God with men, and He shall dwell with them, and He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away"—*Apoc. xxi. 3, 4.* But, resplendent though the

heavenly Jerusalem be, yet the happiness of Heaven is "to see, love, and enjoy God in the kingdom of His glory, for ever and ever", as St. Augustine tells us.[†]

6. "To see God" constitutes "the happiness of Heaven". To look upon a beautiful object is always a source of happiness; but the pleasure and delight which a soul enjoys on seeing God no one can describe. St. Paul tells us that the glories and beauties he saw and heard, when he was caught up into Paradise, were so astonishing and delightful that he was quite enraptured with them, and declares, and repeats it, that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. Now, if the glimpse he there had of God was so delightful as to deprive him of his very senses, what must it be to see God face to face in all the brightness of His glory? We are told in the Gospel, that when our Saviour showed His three beloved disciples, Peter, James, and John, a glimpse of His body in glory, when He was transfigured before them, they were so amazed and out of themselves that they knew not what they said. But if the glorified body of Jesus on earth was a source of such astonishment and ecstasy to His disciples, what must it be to see Him in Heaven, sitting at the right hand of His Father? The Scripture gives us a beautiful description of this singular effect of the Divine presence: "He shall see His face, and His name shall be on their forehead, and night shall be no more; and they shall not need the lamp, nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever"—*Apoc. xxii. 4.*

7. "To love God" is also the great source of the "happiness of Heaven". In this world, although those who love God are the most happy, yet they cannot enjoy full and perfect happiness; for the un-

certainly of knowing whether they are worthy of the love or hatred of their beloved Lord, keeps them almost always in pain. But in Heaven the soul is sure of loving God, and of being in return loved by Him, and knows that the sweet bonds of love by which she is united to Him, can never be broken for all eternity. The love of the soul will be increased by her clearly beholding the graces by which He conducted her to Heaven. She will see that all those crosses which He sent her, were all so many pledges of His desire to make her happy and blessed. Her whole delight then, is in God; her whole affections are fixed in Him; her joy is to please Him; her greatest happiness is to do His will; her most delightful employment is to be looking on His infinite beauty, and contemplating His infinite loveliness.

8. "To enjoy God in the kingdom of His glory" is another great source of the "happiness of Heaven". In "the kingdom of His glory" we shall enjoy God; and in the enjoyment of Him we shall enjoy every comfort, every delight, every satisfaction that the heart is capable of receiving; we shall enjoy every sort of good without the mixture of evil. In this world pleasure is always mingled with bitterness; our joy is never pure; never is there comfort without sadness. It will not be so in Heaven. Neither trouble, nor pain, nor anxiety, nor alarm, nor any other evil shall there disturb the peace and happiness of those who are admitted to the enjoyment of God.†

9. "To see, love, and enjoy God in the kingdom of His glory" shall be, dear children, the happy lot of the Saints; and that not for a time, but "for ever and ever". The certain knowledge that they shall love, see, and enjoy God for eternity, will complete their happiness. If the blessed could entertain any fear of losing God, Heaven would be no longer

Heaven. But no; the blessed are as certain, as God is certain, that the Sovereign good whom they now "see, love, and enjoy", will be their enjoyment for ever. Who can comprehend the excessive happiness that shall arise from the certainty of seeing, loving, and enjoying God for a never-ending eternity? As long as Heaven shall be—and it shall be for ever—as long as God shall be God—and He shall always be what He is now—after ages and millions of years, the Saints shall "see, love, and enjoy God".

10. The eternity of their happiness shall be beginning every instant; and each instant, they shall taste the pleasure of a whole eternity. Oh! why is it that we are not always thinking on that delightful land in which God dwells, and on the happiness of ever seeing and enjoying Him? Oh! what an entrancing thought! dwelling for ever in Paradise; enjoying God, in company with all His Angels and Saints; conversing eternally with Him; singing for ever, before Him, canticles of praise and thanksgiving; ever looking on Him, the soul filled with joy and delight, and seized with rapture and ecstasy! Ever and always. Yes; no fear of change—no apprehension of losing that glory—but a certainty, a full security, that God and Heaven, that peace and joy, will be ours "for ever".§

11. It was this blessed prospect that sweetened all the sufferings and afflictions of the martyrs, and bathed their souls in a torrent of delights, whilst their bodies streamed with blood. Looking up to Heaven, and seeing Jesus Christ presenting them with crowns of glory, and the Angels and Saints smiling down on them, every feeling of pain was subdued. The thought of reigning with their Lord, "for ever and ever", made every sacrifice light, every pang delightful, every torment delicious, every lash soothing, and death in its most terrible form wel-

come. Let it be also, dear children, your encouragement and comfort, to think, that every step you take in God's service, that every pain you feel, that every sacrifice you make, that every evil inclination you subdue, are noticed by the all-seeing eye of God, and recorded in the Book of eternal life to your account.

12. Another source of pleasure in Heaven is this—the looking back on our past life. When, on entering Heaven, you shall look around and consider into what a haven of security you have arrived, and then casting your eyes back on the dangers you have escaped, and the straits you have passed through, and the difficulties you have surmounted, you will exult and praise the Lord for His great mercy, in rescuing you from all these perils. You will then see the dangers that others were in, and the death and damnation that many even of your friends and acquaintances have incurred, who formerly used to laugh and be merry with the world; and while witnessing their wretched condition, you shall feel conscious of your own security, and that now all dangers of damnation are removed. There is no more need now of fear, of watch, of labour, and care. You may now lay down your arms, as the children of Israel did when they entered the land of promise, for there is no longer any enemy to assail you, there is no longer any evil spirit to seduce you, for all now is peace, happiness, and security.

13. In that happy country, there shall be neither hunger, nor thirst, nor want, nor care, nor anxiety, nor doubt, nor fear, nor danger, but there shall reign eternally peace, content, and happiness. The days of sorrow and darkness are now past; the tear of affliction shall be wiped away for ever from the eyes; no sorrowful sigh nor moan shall ever more be heard; no pain, no grief, no solicitude, no fear, nor any other evil shall ever be known. No sound but that

of gladness shall ever more be heard in those happy mansions of the Blessed, where neither "eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him"—I. Cor. ii. 9 ¶

Q. What means Amen?

A. So be it.

14. The word "Amen" comes from the Hebrew verb *aman*, which in its passive signification means constant, certain, or sure: hence, it is often used either to affirm the certainty of what is spoken, or the sincere assent of those who hear. When it is found at the commencement of a passage, such as we find it in a great many sentences of the New Testament, the word "Amen" means *indeed, verily*, and is translated so. When it is repeated twice, as is always the case in St. John, it has the effect of a superlative, in conformity with the spirit of the Hebrew tongue and of the Chaldaic and the Syriac. It is in this sense that we are to understand these words: "Amen, amen, I say unto you". But when the word "Amen" is found at the end of a passage of Scripture, it means "so be it", or an assent to what has been said, and a desire that all we have sued for in our prayers *may be done* and granted to us; and in this sense it is seldom translated. Thus, in the twenty-seventh chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, we read that when the Levites, according to the command of Moses, had pronounced, and said with a loud voice to all the people of Israel: "Cursed be he that honoureth not his father and mother", all the people were commanded to answer, and say "Amen", that is, let it be done, or "So be it".

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

* Now, what is the reward? It is the kingdom of Heaven my brothers. Don't expect me to describe it to you. None but God can describe the glories God has prepared. But reflect. Our faith tells us that the Almighty God will make it His especial business for all eternity to administer to the delight and the joy of the Elect in Heaven—that the Almighty God will bend all the powers of His divine wisdom and omnipotence to that one end—that they may be satiated with delights, that they may be made to enjoy. Reflect, how beautiful this world is in which we live—how magnificent its scenery, how soft and delicious its beauty. How wonderfully varied the colouring of that garb of nature! It is so beautiful, and men get so fond of it, that they actually forget God! Many a man living on earth this moment, if he got the chance of living for ever in this world, would gladly accept it, and give up all hopes of salvation, so beautiful is this earth. And yet, the Almighty God does not intend this world to be a place of enjoyment. He has placed us in this world rather for trial and for sorrow than for utter contentment and joy. This world, as you know, was accursed of God in man's sin; it was robbed of nearly all its beauty: "Accursed is the earth in thy work", said the Lord, and "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee". We have no conception of the beauties of this earth before the fall of the first man. And, dearly beloved, if the place upon which the curse still lingers—if even this place, intended, not for joy, but rather for sorrow, be so beautiful, then what must Heaven be?—a place built and created for the sole purpose of infinite joy, of infinite delight—no more trial, no more care, no more anxiety; but joy—joy unmixed, joy continual, joy eternal. Hence it is that the Scriptures speak of Heaven in so many ways. They compare it to an eternal spring. Here are the words: "The Lord shall stand at Heaven's gate, and to His elect He will say—'Dry away those tears from your eyes. Behold, the grave is gone, the winter is past, the flowers are budding forth in all the land' ". We are told it is a perpetual summer, the sun whereof never sets, the brightness whereof is never clouded; for the sun of that heaven is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. It is compared to an ocean, and a torrent of delight. "They shall be inebriated with the sweetness of Thy house, and of the torrent of Thy joys they shall drink". We

are told that the very atmosphere of Heaven is melodious with sweet music. "And I heard the voices of the twenty-four elders, and I heard the voices of the angels, and the harpers harping upon their harps, until the very air of Heaven seemed filled with celestial song". And yet these words of Scripture are but the faintest image of the joys of Heaven, for they are universal, soul and body receiving every natural delight of which our human nature is capable.

The joys of the soul are principally the following: The joy of the intelligence, whose delight is knowledge. Don't you know yourself that one of the keenest joys of life is the acquisition of some knowledge, some science that you never knew before, some great truth that never flashed upon you till now, some mighty vista of learning opened up before you which you had no idea of before—to be able to do things you never did before—this is the joy of the intelligence. To them Almighty God will unfold Himself, unclouded, unveiled, and in that glorious light the intellect shall behold the light of all knowledge. No amount of human learning or knowledge has ever fully and entirely filled and satiated the intelligence of man; but the moment that the intellect gets a glimpse of God, that moment it will receive all knowledge in the full and perfect certainty of God. The next joy of the soul is the joy of the affections, loving and possessing that which is in the highest degree good and beautiful. In Heaven God will give to the blessed souls, not only to behold Him and to contemplate, but actually to possess Him. He will give all His heart, all His love, Himself to be ours. "I Myself will be thy reward exceeding great". Infinite loveliness, infinite beauty, unfolding every moment of that eternal existence new forms of dazzling beauty, evolving out of His own infinite perfections new, startling, ravishing forms of hitherto unknown excellence. Thus God will be ours, and as much the possession and the joy of each individual soul as if there was no other soul there to partake of that enjoyment. The third joy of the soul is power—power to do everything—that power shall be given to us. Every wish dictated by the will shall be no sooner conceived than gratified. No matter how extravagant the idea of joy, if it is only conceived and desired, no sooner shall it be desired than fulfilled.—*Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

THE DEATH OF A PREACHER WHILE SPEAKING ON THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

† M. Boursoul discharged at Rennes, during forty years the functions of the sacred ministry. He bore, without inter-

ruption or relaxation, the fatigues of the pulpit and the painful labours of the Confessional. He wished, he used to say, to die with arms in his hands, that is, in the discharge of his duty. "Ah! if I were worthy to obtain this favour of my God! I every day beg of Him that I may close my life either in announcing His Gospel from the chair of truth, or in exercising, in the sacred tribunal, the rights of justice and of mercy". A prayer dictated by such heroic motives of ardent charity merited to be heard. On Easter Monday, 1774, Father Boursoul said Mass at five o'clock in the morning, and then went to his confessional. About two o'clock he went to the Church of All Saints, and at three ascended the pulpit, to preach on the glory and happiness of the saints. Towards the conclusion of the first part of his discourse, after a most lively and affecting description of the beauties of paradise and of the joys of the blessed, he made a new effort, and cried out, "No, my brethren, never will it be given to the weak eyes of man to sustain here below the splendour of the divine Majesty"; then lowering a little his voice, "It is in Heaven that we shall see Him face to face, and without a veil". These words were pronounced in a distinct tone, after which he said again in Latin, "Videbimus eum sicuti est", and leaning forward on the front of the pulpit, he calmly expired. His eyes were fixed on Heaven, and he continued in this position. The church was filled with an extraordinary concourse of people, and the consternation became general: some screamed; others wept; others fainted; others cried aloud, "He is a saint! he died while speaking of the happiness of Heaven". The voice of a child was distinctly heard pronouncing these words: "He spoke of paradise, and he is gone to take possession of it"—*Abbè Carron.*

THE PILGRIM OF THE HOLY LAND SUMMONED TO HEAVEN.

† A gentleman well known for his fervour and piety, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He longed to visit every spot that had received the impress of our Lord's sufferings; and after going to confession, and making his communion with great devotion, he set out on his travels. He first paused at Nazareth, where the great mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished; he then proceeded to Bethlehem, to kneel at the spot in which our Lord first deigned to visit this earth as a suffering infant; he walked by the banks of the Jordan, the scene of our Lord's baptism; and then went to the desert which had witnessed that wonderful forty days'

fast; to the mountain where Jesus was transfigured; to the house at Jerusalem consecrated by the institution of the Holy Eucharist; to the garden of Olives; to the Pretorium; and to Calvary, where the awful sacrifice was consummated. He visited the scene of our Lord's burial and resurrection; and finally ascended Mount Olivet, fondly recalling the blessing which our Lord gave to the Apostles before His ascension. He had visited every place which was in any way connected with our Lord's life or death, and then, with a heart glowing with love, exclaimed, "O Jesus, Jesus, my much-loved Saviour, since I can no longer follow Thy footsteps on earth, call me to Thyself in Heaven". His prayer was immediately heard; for it was no sooner uttered than he expired. The intensity of his love had broken his heart; and after death these words were found engraven on his breast. "Jesus, my love"—*St. Bernard of Sienna*.

THE PEACE AND DELIGHTS OF HEAVEN.

§ Then think of the life of peace in Heaven. Peace! let us say to suck the word as if it were a honey-comb. Peace! peace! how unlike life, how unlike earth, how unlike even the fatiguing active ties of grace! How we have longed for it all life through, and long for it now, alas! more than we long for God! Imagination can hardly picture to itself a life without trouble or disgust, a life without a past to excite regret, or a present to gall with a yoke, or a future all dim and misty in its uncertainty. The sleep of happy honest labour is an image of this delicious calm. The way in which land and sea, lakes and woodlands, as if their display of morning beauty had tired them, seem to lie down afresh and sleep in the noonday sun, is an emblem of our heavenly rest. The starry skies at soundless midnight give us a feeling which we cannot express, but which helps us to a notion of the utter peace of that blissful hereafter. Yet after all, it is like no other peace; for it is a participation in that peace of God which surpasses human understanding. Can all this be for us? Is it actually one of our possibilities? Nay, more than that, nearer than that, likelier than that. An ocean of heavenliest peace, bound in mysterious and glad tranquillity, inviting us to sail upon its bosom onward into brightness for ever and for ever. Oh! if this were all, if there were nothing but this peace, is it not more than a sufficient reward for a long life of austere holiness?

Then, after the resurrection, there are the pleasures of

sense. Who can tell the powers of enjoyment which there will be in the glorified bodies of the just, raised up in the likeness of Jesus? In this world of faith, the senses seem stronger than God, because we do not yet see Him. They lead all men captive with a passionate captivity. The world goes wild with the intoxicating enchantments of sensual pleasures. How exquisite they are! Think of the delight of the eye in contemplating the beauties of nature, and expatiating over magnificent scenery, or feeding itself on some fascinating work of art. Or, again, reflect how the ear revels in sweet sounds, and is entranced with the spells of music. Hours pass, and the lapse of time is all **unheeded**. The rest of the outer world has faded away, and the soul hangs over the abysses of harmony, as if it would break away from the body, and drown itself in those deeps of wavy sound for ever. Or, again, think with what exquisite tranquil encroachment the odours of sweet flowers and aromatic gums steal over us, and dislodge cares and weariness, and revive the drooping soul, and put a new life into us, and a life of such peculiar spell-bound gentleness and love. All these things will be in heaven. They will be there unintermittingly. Only they will exist in infinitely higher degree than are possible on earth. Yet all this is but a little thing to say of the senses of the glorified body. Countless kinds of men and unimaginable pleasures will be opened out to us there, each one far surpassing those of earth, pleasures worthy of the ecstasy of heaven, worthy of the magnificence of God.

But the sweetest of all earthly joys is love, and the life in heaven is a life of love. Each one of the blessed will love us with a might of love far beyond all earthly love, and the blessed are innumerable. Who can think of the bliss of that love with which the sinless Mother of God will endow us? No fond earthly mother, rapt in the exclusiveness of an excessive love, ever hung over her first born and her only born with a fondness like to that which the Mother of Jesus will testify to each of the redeemed. Shall I dare speak of the sacred Humanity, or of how we shall share in the love which Peter once enjoyed upon the shores of Gennesareth, or John when he leant upon the bosom in which the sacred heart was beating? We have no measure for a bliss like that. Yet all this put together—saints, angels, Mary, human heart of Jesus—it is not such a love as the one which still awaits us. What a life to lead! But is this heaven? I answer both yes and no. It is the poor part of Heaven. It is Heaven with Heaven left out, Heaven without the beatific vision of our dear God.—*Father Faber.*

HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

¶ Heaven's joy must be very pure. Every delight here is alloyed by sorrow: oh, but, my dear brothers, there is no sorrow in Heaven, no remorseful recollections of the past—all these are wiped away, and so far as the memory might be a source of sorrow, the memory is a blank, but everything that can conduce, in the past or the present, to joy, is carefully retained by that memory. How little the sacrifice we make, and how great the reward! How few the trials, and how immense the glory we receive in return! No wearying anticipation of the future, no rankling fear that it shall ever cease. Shall I ever lose my taste for it? Shall it ever pall upon me? Is there any fear I shall ever be deprived of this present glory? Is it all mine? Oh, yes, and for ever; with no apprehension that a shadow of passing sorrow shall fall upon the brightness of our joy.

How long is this pure and universal joy to last? Launch out your imagination into the mighty, limitless ocean of Eternity—navigate it if you can, cross it if you can in idea, and find the shore that does not exist on the other side. For ever! For ever! As long as God is God. For ever! All time and all notion of time shall be lost. The recollection of the few years of our present life shall fade away in the distance, until it becomes the merest speck or shade of thought in the past; a little spark of light, fading, fading away in the tremendous concourse of myriads of millions of ages. And then this joy and glory shall be only beginning, as fresh, as powerful, as ecstatic, after all those millions of years, as at the first moment when we were caught up with the ravishing joy of its possession. For ever, for ever—always beginning, never ending—secure, supreme, universal, pure as the joy of God. “Amen, I say unto you”, says the Saviour, “the Lord will gird Himself round, and will pass amongst them, and will minister unto them a banquet of eternal joy”.

Brothers, what do you think of it? Is it not worth making an effort for? When Christopher Columbus was persuaded there must be a continent across the Western Sea, he did not hesitate to launch out and expose his life for the sake of discovering America. When a man hears that a gold mine has been discovered in California or Australia, he does not hesitate to start at once and expose himself to a thousand dangers in the hope of taking out of the earth, laboriously, a few nuggets of gold. And when a man knows that on the other coast, on the verge of the few years of this life, lie

the golden palace of God, the land of Heaven, he will not take the trouble to spend those few years in an effort to reach that shore! Is not this strange? They tell us when Oliver Cromwell led his roundhead troops down from the north through Ireland until he came to the Golden Vale of Tipperary, there on the banks of the Suir he saw the loveliest country, one of the richest spots on God's earth, and turning to his soldiers, he said: "Is not this a land worth fighting and dying for?" And they cried out: "Yes, it is indeed a country worth fighting and shedding our blood for".

Behold Heaven! Lift up your thoughts and the eyes of your soul. Hark to that music, and hear the choirs of angels pouring forth the hosannas of joy and glory. Behold there light on light, passing from sphere to sphere, and still growing in majesty and brightness. Behold Mary aloft upon her throne, and above that again the great high throne, in light inaccessible, of God! Hark to the cry of eternal delight, of praise and glory, coming from the lips of the martyrs, who purchased that glory by the shedding of their blood, and who now proclaim that what they paid was as nothing in comparison to what they receive. Shall we, then, hesitate to give a few hours of our time, to make a few manly efforts to keep down the devil that is below us, and around us, and within us, and actually to raise up our nature to something that is noble, something that is holy, something that is God-like in the effort to gain it?—*The Very Rev. Thomas Burke, O.P.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by life everlasting?
2. Is the observance of God's Commandments the only means of obtaining life everlasting?
3. On seeing Heaven for the first time, what shall our delight be?
4. What shall we hear and see in the life to come?
5. What is the description that St. John gives us of Heaven?
6. Is seeing God one of the greatest sources of the happiness of Heaven?
7. Is it a great source of happiness in Heaven to love God?
8. Does the enjoyment of God constitute the happiness of Heaven?

9. Shall the eternity of the happiness of Heaven fill the Saints with the greatest joy?

10. Should we frequently think of the eternal happiness of Heaven?

11. What was it that encouraged the martyrs to suffer their torments with joy?

12. Shall looking back on the past be a source of happiness in Heaven?

13. Shall hunger or thirst, or any other evil, be found in Heaven?

14. What do you mean by the word, Amen?

PRACTICE.

1. Often turn your thoughts on Heaven, that it may be to you a source of consolation in this valley of tears.

2. Let the thought of the eternal happiness of Heaven animate you to serve God faithfully in this life.

3. Pray daily to God for all those graces necessary to gain Heaven.

PRAYER.

O dear God ! who can tell the happiness Thou hast prepared in Heaven for those who love and serve Thee here? Why is that we have not served Thee during the years that have passed? We have, dear Jesus, often strayed from Thee; but we now firmly resolve to serve Thee evermore, and to suffer every torment sooner than offend Thee by mortal sin. In the performance of this resolution the thoughts of Heaven shall assist us; and its glories and delights shall every day animate us to walk in the ways of Thy Commandments. O blessed Sion ! O holy city of God ! may the day quickly come on which we shall be introduced into Thy happy mansions; for our sorrowful pilgrimage will then be at an end, and happiness will be for ever ours. O my God ! when shall that day arrive when we shall possess Thee, and be able to say to Thee, "Jesus, we can never more lose Thee"? O Mary, our hope, pray for us now, and at every time, until you see us at your feet in Heaven. Amen.

THE END.

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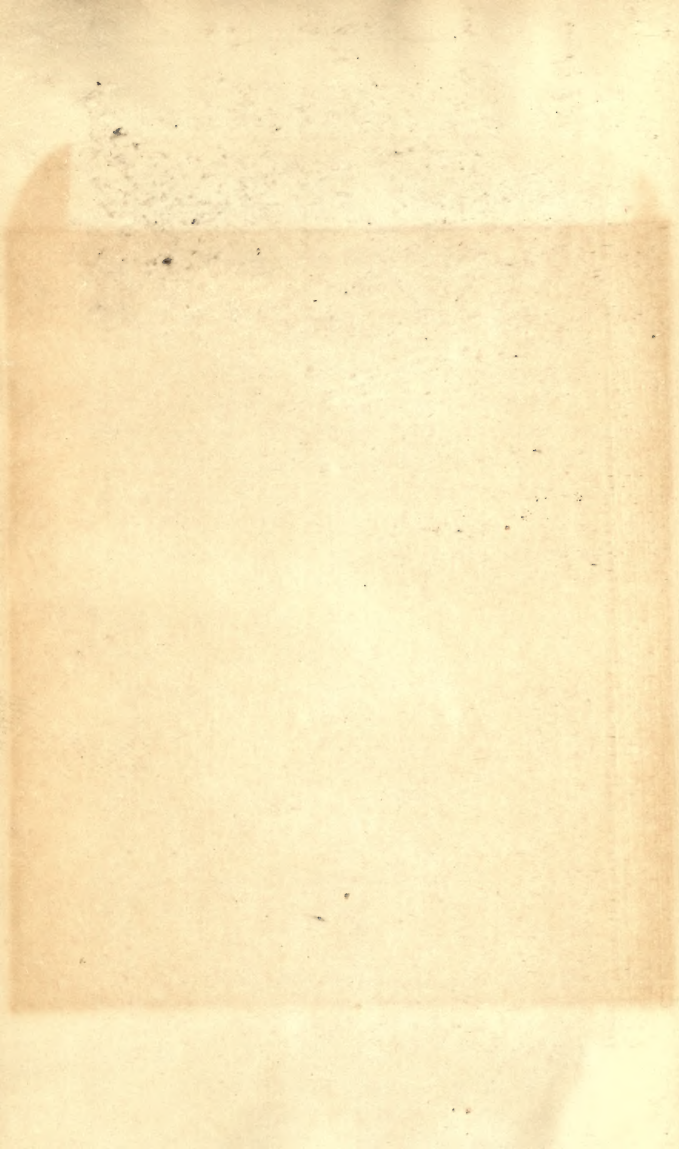
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